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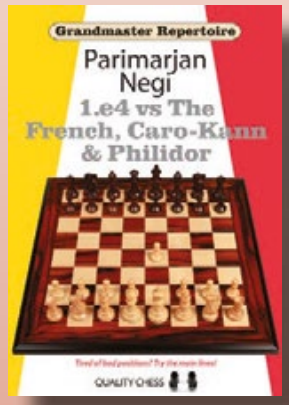
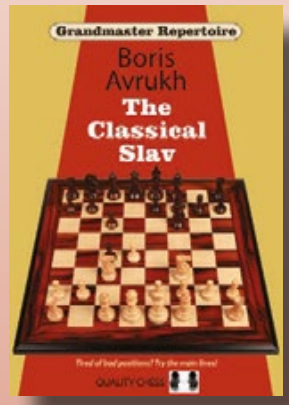
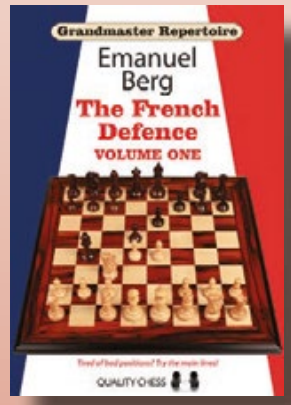
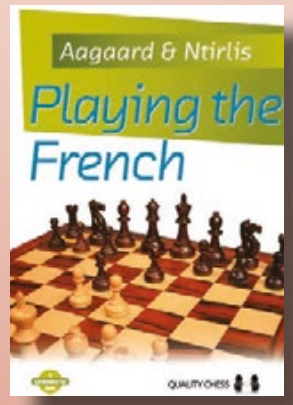
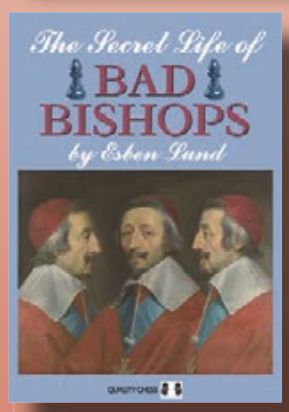
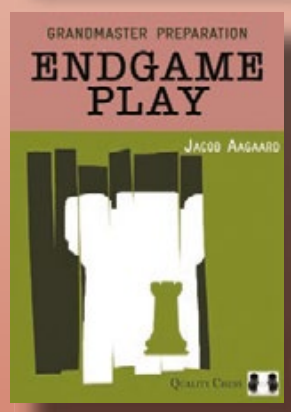


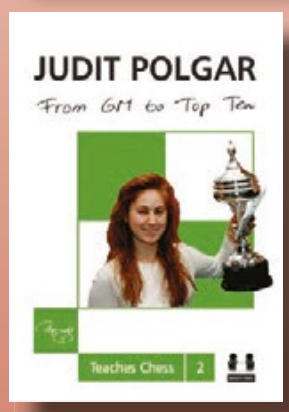


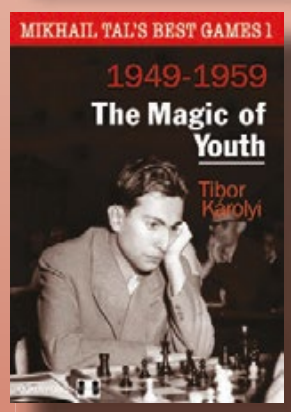




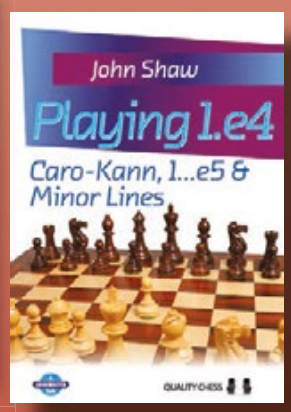


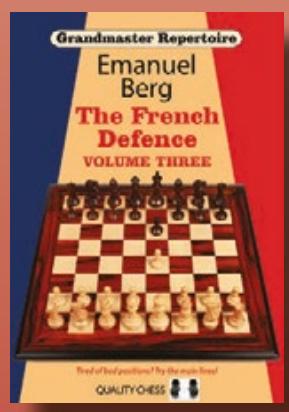


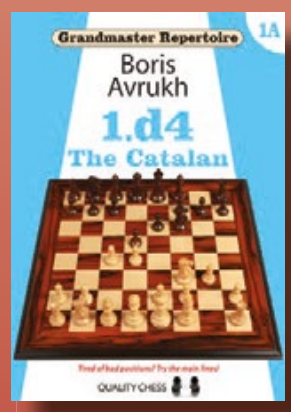


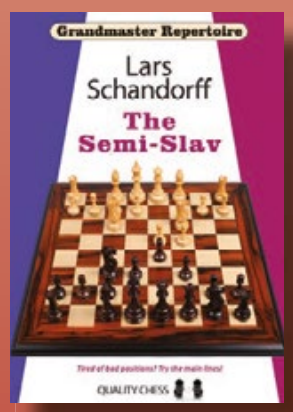


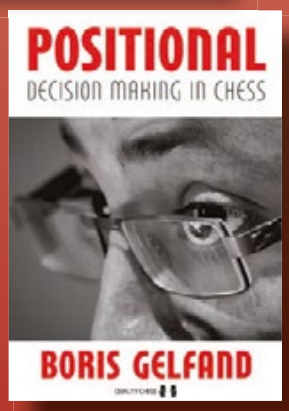
and the autumn looks even better!

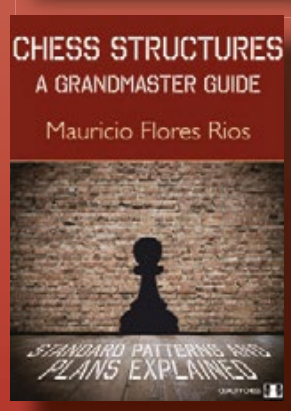


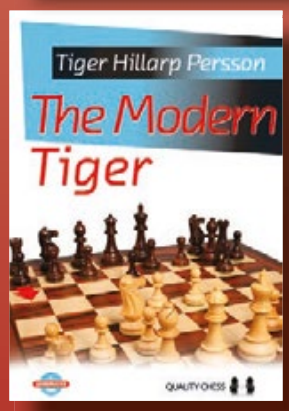


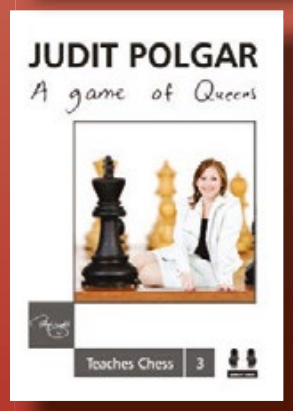












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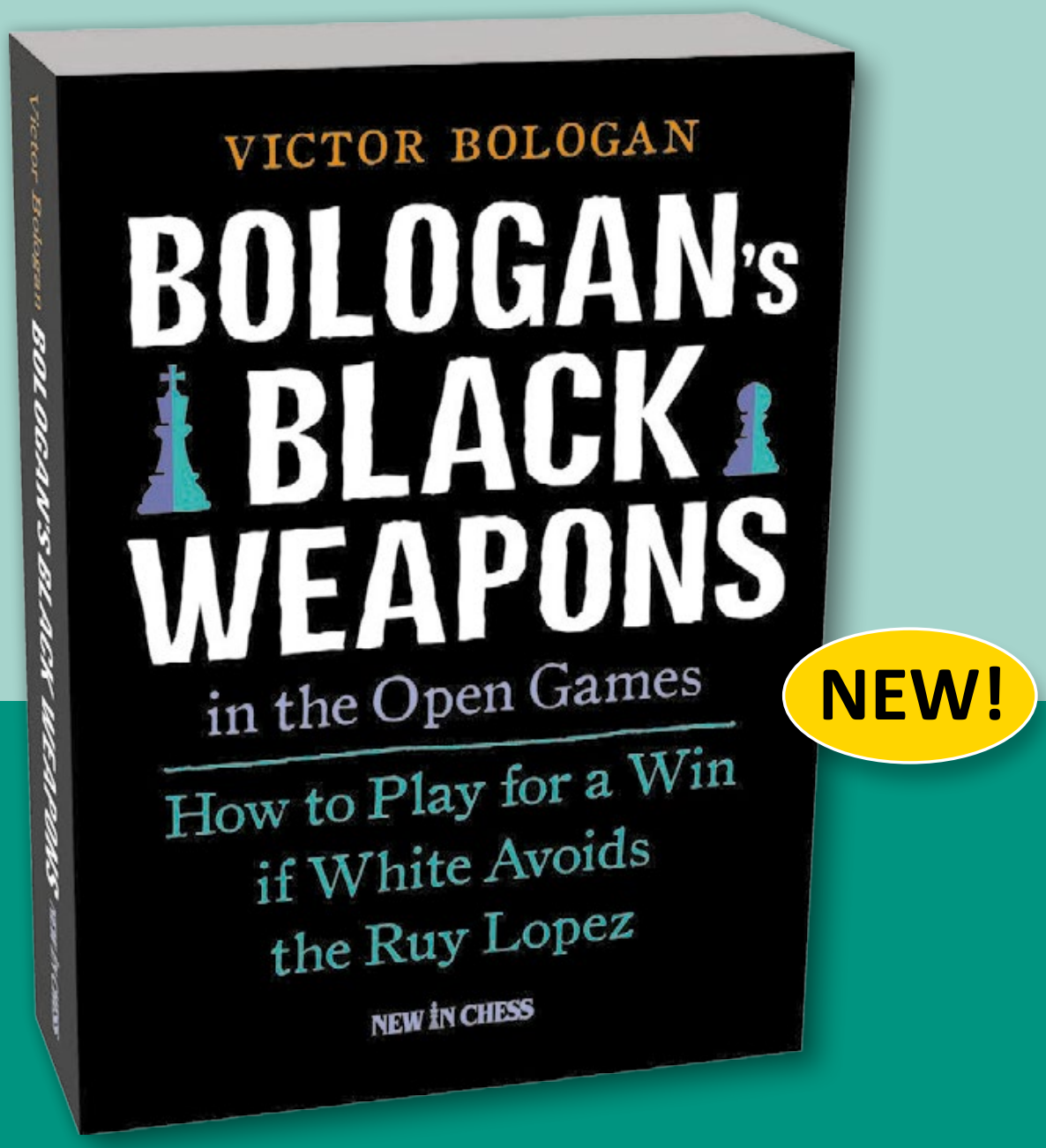
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COVER
Wang Yue and Ni Hua
Photo: Jilin Zhang

"In the end the women's team flew on the private plane of Andrey Filatov, the well-known patron and president of the Russian Chess Federation. A trifle? Possibly. But it is out of such trifles that ultimate success is sometimes formed." – *Evgeny Najer*

After the gold rush

Mongolia is drawn into a new gold rush. Mining has become the spark of a new era of high economic growth. A growing upper class flashes designer clothes and luxury cars in the capital Ulaan Baatar. But in the rest of the country, where more than a million people still lead a nomadic life, reality is different. In an attempt to escape from the fate of the poor, many people called 'ninjas' open illegal mines in the hope to find gold. Purensuren, a 40-something- year-old man, digs holes in the steppe along with his two kids. Batsuren, aged 14, is a fan of Real Madrid, but he has to put up with a Barcelona t-shirt. Batjargal is an energetic 11-year-old who wears a pair of U.S. Army socks of unknown origin. They live on a traditional yurt, where, without electricity, there is not much to do. So both children play chess as long as the sun rays enter the place. They don't know all the rules and have made up their own to fill the blanks. 'When I get to Ulaan Baatar I will learn to play properly', Batsuren says.
(Photo and text: **Zigor Aldama**)

The opportune time

The last time India's best players, both male and female, took part in the Olympiad was in Turin in 2006. Vishy Anand's lacklustre 50 per cent result in the north of Italy convinced him that these massive team competitions didn't bring out the best in him. Koneru Humpy stopped playing for the national team following a conflict with officials of the Indian Chess Federation who didn't want her father, who was also her trainer, to accompany her. When she was without him in Turin, she said, she kept falling sick throughout the tourney.

ARVIND AARON

Dasari Anvesh and Koneru Humpy are about to be showered with uncooked rice.

This time the number three in the world rankings, behind Judit Polgar and Hou Yifan, had an additional reason not to go to Tromsø. On August 14th, she got married in Vijayawada, the second largest city in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh after Hyderabad. And it wasn't any old wedding. About 2500 people came for the reception and even during the wedding ceremony, which took place at an unusual time, shortly after midnight, there were between 500 and 1000 people. The date had been carefully chosen, as it was supposed to be an auspicious day for marriage. For that reason there were said to be a total of 1000 marriages that day.

Our reporter's riveting account continues: 'From 12 midnight, Dasari Anvesh, the groom, was involved in reciting a few mantras with the priests. Soon, Koneru Ashok (Humpy's father) and his wife Latha came on the stage and washed the feet of Anvesh in tradition. They wiped his feet and presented him a dress set and he came in wearing it a few minutes later. When Humpy came on stage, a long pink cloth was held up so that the bride and groom could not see each other! Humpy, with her father on her right and mother on her left, held a coconut and the priests gave out stories and commentaries. At the opportune time, the priest directed the groom to open his hands and face the ceiling and Humpy's hands came firmly over them. This time, the separating cloth was removed. The couple were feeling each other. They then faced each other in kneeling position and Humpy's right hand was over Anvesh's head and her left hand was supporting her right hand. Anvesh was also in similar position. The couple were blessing each other. After they had been in that pose for two or three minutes the guests were invited to queue and come and shower uncooked rice and bless the couple, as is common in South India.'

Composer Morse

The name Colin Dexter may not immediately ring a bell with all of you, but when we tell you that he is the creator of the TV detective Inspector Morse your face may light up in recognition. Now, what's that got to do with chess? We'll tell you. When we came across a questionnaire that Colin Dexter filled out for the *Daily Mail*, one of the questions he had to answer was whether there was an unfulfilled ambition that continued to haunt him. And guess what? He replied: 'To be World Chess Champion. I was pretty good at school – but never good enough.' How recognizable!

Colin Dexter: haunted by a familiar unfulfilled ambition.

Now did you know that Inspector Morse owes his name to Sir Jeremy Morse, who was the Chairman of Lloyds Bank from 1977-93, and was responsible for the bank's sponsorship of the Lloyds Bank Masters tournaments? Sir Jeremy is very well-known in the world of cryptic crosswords, which is a passion he shares with Colin Dexter, but he has also published over 300 chess problems. We are told that his book *Chess Problems: Tasks and Records* is the definitive reference work on the subject. What's more, despite being in his 86th year, Sir Jeremy has just finished a completely new edition of the book, which will be published later this year.

The real (Sir Jeremy) Morse has finished a new edition of his book on chess problems.

Based on a true chess story

This year's Toronto Film Festival is the place to be if you're interested in film and chess. Among the films listed (world premiere!) is Edward Zwick's eagerly awaited *Pawn Sacrifice*, a feature 'based on a true story', the story being the World Championship match between Bobby Fischer and Boris Spassky in Reykjavik in 1972 – and of course all the Cold War machinations and the psychologi-

Toby Maguire as Bobby Fischer: not bad at all?

cal drama surrounding the American chess genius. Imagining star actor Tobey Maguire (think Spider Man) as Bobby Fischer was quite a stretch when we first heard about it, but now, having seen stills of the movie, our optimism has grown.

And there is more. Also listed in Toronto is a gem from New Zealand, *The Dark Horse*, directed by James Napier, which received rave reviews when it premiered earlier this year at the New Zealand International Film Festival. And it's another 'based on a true story' film. The star is Cliff Curtis, who plays Genesis Potini, a chess player who tries to battle mental illness from a violent childhood by teaching a class of troubled kids how to play chess. Let's hope *The Dark Horse* will have the same impact in Toronto as it had in its home country. We can't wait for it to embark on a tour around the globe.

Cliff Curtis brilliantly plays Genesis Potini in *The Dark Horse*.

Different interests

Probably the first one to be affected by the re-election of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, apart from the delegates who got their vice-presidencies or other rewards for voting for the incumbent, was World Champion Magnus Carlsen. In a first reaction he expressed his disappointment that there had not been a change of power, rightly pointing out that 23 years is too long for a president to successfully lead a body like FIDE. With Ilyumzhinov's win the Norwegian saw his hopes dashed that the World Championship might be held in Norway or the United States with a considerably better prize-fund than the one million euro that FIDE says to have found in Sochi. Still, he hoped for the negotiations to be reopened and asked for a postponement of the match. Although this postponement would also be in the interest of television companies like Norwegian national television, that are interested in investing in chess by obtaining the rights for the match, Ilyumzhinov stuck to his guns and said that the match will start in Sochi on November 7th, claiming that the FIDE calendar leaves him no other choice.

MARIA EMMELIANOVA

FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov watches the man who has done more for the promotion of chess in the past years than anyone else, at the start of his game against Fabiano Caruana.

It's an unfortunate situation in which the World Champion, who has done more for the promotion of chess in the past years than anyone else, is kept hostage by the FIDE president, who seems to have entirely different interests. There is a worrying lack of transparency, and despite repeated requests Carlsen's management has not been informed where the money for the match in Sochi is coming from and whether the required deposit has been made. It is clear that Carlsen is uncomfortable with the situation he has been forced into. Common sense would advise the FIDE president to listen to the World Champion. If not, there is the spectre of renewed chaos in the chess world. If Carlsen refuses to play, Sergey Karjakin is the next in line, number 6 in the world rankings and a strong grandmaster. Let's not even imagine the chaos that would ensue if he were to play Anand for the FIDE world championship match. ■

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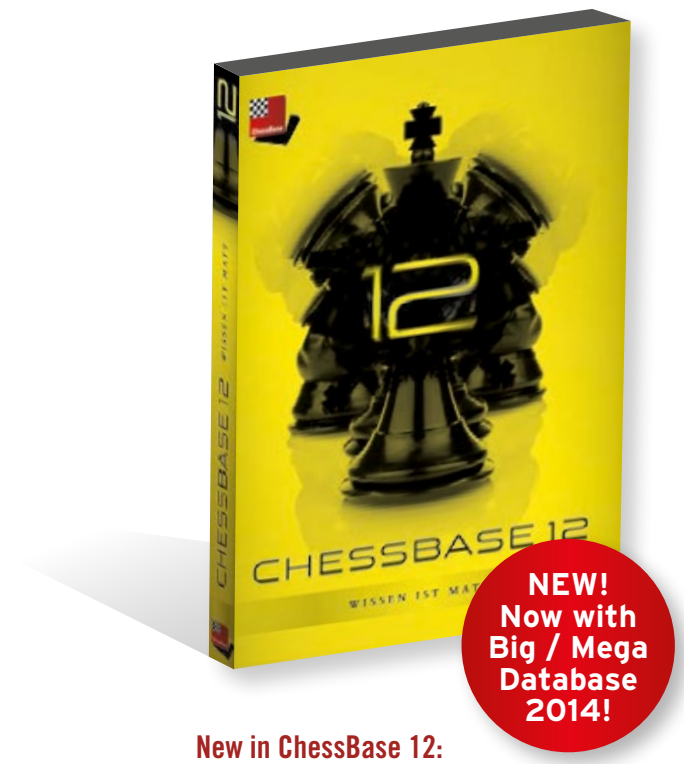

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System requirements: Minimum: Minimum: Pentium III 1 GHz, 1 GB RAM, Windows Vista, XP (Service Pack 3), DirectX9 graphics card with 256 MB RAM, DVD-ROM drive, Windows Media Player 9 and Internet access to activate the program, Playchess.com, Let's Check, Engine Cloud and updates.

Recommended: PC Intel Core i7, 2.8 GHz, 4 GB RAM, Windows 7 (64 Bit) or Windows 8 (64 Bit), DirectX10 graphics card (or compatible) with 512 MB RAM or more, 100% DirectX10 compatible sound card, Windows Media Player 11, DVD ROM drive and Internet access to activate the program, Playchess.com, Let's Check, Engine Cloud and updates.

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Fair & Square

Judit Polgar: 'I hope in the next 20 years. But I'm not sure she's been born yet.'
(On her retirement, talking to The Times, on whether there is a female world champion on the horizon)

Jan Hein Donner: 'How could anybody lose to a Chinaman?'
(Back in 1978 at China's Olympiad debut, a few days before he sensationally lost in a 20-move brilliancy to China's Liu Wenzhe)

Hikaru Nakamura: 'Is it my imagination or does this Olympiad feel like the end of a generation with many great players retiring or not competing again?'
(On Twitter)

Vassily Smyslov: 'Intuition is significantly more important than knowledge!'

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle: 'Amberly excelled in chess – one mark, Watson, of a scheming mind.'
(In the Sherlock Holmes mystery The Adventure of the Retired Colourman)

Ivan Sokolov: 'You have a chase to become a good chess player if you travel to play chess, not play chess to travel.'

Joe Gallagher: 'One of the greatest advantages of chess over other sports is that you can always resign.'

Joel Lautier: 'If you're going to be a great classical chef you must learn French. If you're going to be an opera singer, you have to know Italian. If you're going to be a chessplayer, you have to know Russian.'
(In King's Gambit by Paul Hoffman)

Wesley So: '2750+ Finally! Thank you God, for all of my wins are due to You!'
(On Twitter on the publication of the August 1 2014 FIDE Rating List)

Ljubomir Ljubojevic: 'I have won many games that have not made me happy; and when I lose, I am also not happy. My friends ask, "So when are you happy?" That's the way chess is; you are happy only rarely; the rest is grief.'

Mikhail Botvinnik: 'When computers start playing chess well, interest in chess will increase. I am convinced that chess will gain, and so will the Grandmasters.'

Vishy Anand: 'There are two kinds of equal positions. Equal positions you like to play, and equal positions you can't stand the sight of.'

Alexander Alekhine: 'Life in prison was dull and uneventful. No books, chessboard or set, nor newspapers. Bogoljubow and I entertained ourselves by playing blindfold and our fierce battles were interrupted when I was put in solitaire [sic] confinement for smiling in front of a guard which was against prison policy.'
(On being interned as war broke out midway through the Mannheim International tournament in Germany in 1914)

Stephen Colbert: 'Magnus Carlsen was a good guest, but I still prefer the kind of chess you play with checkers.'

Bobby Fischer: 'Your body has to be in top condition. Your chess deteriorates as your body does. You can't separate body from mind.'

Boris Spassky: 'We were in the fifth hour. He was lost, ruined, not a chance! I knew it, he knew it. But he sat there – almost an hour! – calculating, calculating, calculating! Inside he was screaming. He was pale, like a dead man, but this force was going through him like millions of volts. I could feel it smashing and smashing at me across the board. Well, it had an effect, I can tell you that. Five or ten minutes – all right. But an hour! In the end, I was the one screaming inside. When you play Bobby, it is not a question if you win or lose. It is a question if you survive.'
(After defeating Fischer at the Siegen Olympiad in 1970)

Ray Charles: 'Dizzy [Gillespie] used to beat the hell out of me when we played chess.'
(In a 2002 Chess Life cover story)

Viktor Kortchnoi: 'Too many checks means there is something wrong with the attack.'

Olaf Ulvestad: 'A master sweats and squirms to find the right square for a piece. A grandmaster tosses a piece in the air and it lands on the right square!'

Goodbye to Tromsø

The 41st Olympiad in Tromsø welcomed a record 177 teams in the Open section. As the Russian top-seeds faltered once again, China created a sensation by winning the Hamilton Russell Cup for the first time in a perfect demonstration of friendship and determination. The Russian women slightly eased the pain by eclipsing the Chinese favourites in the fight for the Vera Menchik trophy for the third time in a row. The FIDE presidential elections ended in a landslide victory for Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, 110-61. Fully backed by the Kremlin, the Russian knew how to get the support of the vast majority of delegates and saw off the challenge of Garry Kasparov.

With a budget of close to $25 million, the Tromsø Olympiad was the most expensive in history. But the memories will be mixed. Those who travelled above the Arctic Circle will remember the heart-warming cheerfulness of hundreds of volunteers, but also a venue that did not really befit a top sporting event.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

Huge banners all over town told you that Tromsø was the place where you wanted to be.

Walking around Tromsø, you could hardly miss the signs that the Chess Olympiad had come to town. Huge banners told you that this was the place 'where great minds meet'; at bus stops posters informed you that Garry Kasparov was 'the future of chess'; and everywhere you encountered groups of well-known and lesser known chess players and officials. On the day that I arrived, one of the first familiar faces that I ran into was a high-ranking FIDE official. As I knew more or less where the tournament hall was situated, but wondered where the entrance was, I asked him about the venue. Raising his eyebrows he feigned not to understand. 'Venue? I don't know about a venue, but there is a big garage down there where they play chess.' His sneer said a lot about the friction between the organizers and FIDE concerning the upcoming presidential elections, in which FIDE believed the Norwegians to be on the side of Kasparov. But it wasn't just an emotional reaction. His tone became understandable when I walked into the building where the games were played. Instead of the modern convention centre at a short drive from Tromsø's city centre that the organizers had had in mind only one year ago, they had opted for a less appealing building closer to the hotels where most of the players stayed. Actually, it was a former brewery. Mack, 'the world's most northerly brewery' had been happy to rent the building out to the Olympiad so they could move to more modern facilities on the outskirts of Tromsø. With 7000 square metres the premises offered enough space for the Olympiad, but unsurprisingly it lacked facilities that seem essential for such a large gathering. To begin with, there was no air-conditioning, which led to many complaints from the players. In the higher regions the air tended to become too hot and stuffy, while in parts of the lower regions players would feel cold. The main gripe during the first days, however, concerned the mobile toilets, of which there were far too few and which were not separated for men and women. Due to the loud protests the situation was improved considerably, but it remained far from ideal.

Close to the top matches there were seats for a couple of hundred visitors, but apart from having the opportunity of seeing the players in the flesh, it was unclear what the spectators were offered in return for an entrance fee of 300 Kroner, which is indeed about $50(!).

Once outside the playing areas the Mackhallen wasn't too inspiring, as you often had the feeling you were in a derelict factory building that might be demolished soon after the event. The area where the campaign teams had their

booths and where dealers offered chess merchandise for sale wasn't the social meeting place it always is at Olympiads, but a gloomy place that could hardly be called inviting. Sadly, probably due to strict Norwegian import laws, there was no bookstand either, another traditional magnet for many chess players who have limited access to chess books in their own countries.

Generally, the question prevailed what the organizers had been doing in the years they had to prepare the Olympiad and why they forgot to consider so many aspects and details. The high number of participating countries may have come as a surprise, but would there not have been any accommodation problems if, say, the same number of teams had turned up as at the previous Olympiad? It's hard to imagine with all the match arbiters now being accommodated 70 kilometres outside Tromsø and a large number of participants staying in private homes. Perhaps typical were the visa problems for quite a number of teams that arose only one month before the Olympiad. Not because the Norwegian visa rules had suddenly changed, but because apparently no one had given this unavoidable and predictable issue any thought.

Fortunately, these imperfections remained of minor importance, thanks to two major counter-forces. To begin with, the Olympiad remains the best place to meet old and new friends and nothing can spoil that wonderful feeling. And secondly, the enthusiasm and friendliness of the large army of volunteers cannot be praised enough. Whatever instructions they had to give (the way you had to access certain areas wasn't always in line with logic), they kept doing so with the friendliest of smiles.

For the chess fans who didn't come to Mackhallen, the 41st Olympiad must simply have been two weeks crammed with chess. The Norwegians were once again spoiled by national television with extensive live transmissions, while everyone outside Norway with an Internet connection could follow the action on

Georgios Makropoulos: 'If Garry thinks he can bullshit by promising all kinds of big amounts while he already knows that he will lose, Kirsan can bullshit as well!'

Chess24, the ambitious start-up from Hamburg/Gibraltar that aims to be a universal chess platform. To promote their product, they had offered the Tromsø organizers to broadcast the Olympiad for free, an offer that was understandably difficult to reject. Besides their excellent coverage, the people at home could also follow reports on ChessBase, another chess firm based in Hamburg, which had come to Norway with a big team.

With China's win and India claiming the bronze medals, the Tromsø Olympiad may be a historical watershed. Only once before did an Asian team finish among the first three, in Turin in 2006, when China won the silver medals. The chess boom in Asia had already borne fruit in junior world championships, but now a growing number of their players are ready to play a prominent role at the highest level. What's more, both teams were mainly composed of eager youngsters with a bright future ahead of them.

It's tempting to speak about age when discussing the disappointing results of many of the favourites in this Olympiad. Russia, Ukraine, France, Armenia, the USA, they must all have come to Tromsø with high hopes. Perhaps a mega-event like the Olympiad, in a big hall where you are one of very many and where you have to walk hundreds of metres to queue for the toilet suits hungry youngsters better than grandmasters who have seen it all and prefer the comfort of a closed elite tournament. But perhaps this is all conjecture. After all, there was also Hungary, brimming with experience, who 12 years after their second place in Bled, saw everything fall in place and again took the silver medals. Or Veselin Topalov, who may have lost the prestigious encounter with Vladimir Kramnik, but did win the gold medal on Board 1.

Experience most definitely played a key part in the FIDE presidential elections. Having received the blessing and, no doubt, financial support of Russia's President Vladimir Putin, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov knew exactly how to get a vast majority of the delegates behind him. Once the votes were counted, Garry Kasparov could only conclude that there had been no last-minute swing in his favour, but that, on the contrary, many delegates who had promised to vote for him had deserted him. For the neutral observer it must have been bewildering to see how Ilyumzhinov got away with everything. And then we're not even talking about buying votes, which was done on a massive scale, but is always difficult to prove. A telling example was the case of Gabon, one of several federations which were suddenly removed from the FIDE website when it became clear that they were going to vote for Kasparov, only to be replaced by new federations that were pro-Ilyumzhinov. The pro-Kasparov delegate from Gabon could argue whatever he wanted in the General Assembly, the decision was not turned back and hardly anyone seemed to care. Painful was Ilyumzhinov's plea at the end of this discussion. He asked the 'new' delegate of Gabon to vote for Kasparov and said he was going to visit Gabon as soon as possible. 'Gabon is my favourite country,' he dramatically exclaimed, and there were even people who applauded. Whether there was anyone who believed that the 'new' delegate was indeed going to vote for Kasparov is hard to say.

Afterwards Kasparov regretted the positive tone of his election speech and wished he had called a spade a spade. But he was in a difficult position. There was a toss which of the candidates was to give

his speech first. Kasparov won that toss and Carol Jarecki, who supervised the voting, said, 'So you go first.' Instead of saying, 'No, I won the toss, I can decide and I want to go second', Kasparov took the floor, which proved to be an expensive mistake.

Not because there was anything wrong with his speech. After a hesitant start he warmed up quickly, sketched his plans and painted the future of chess that could start tomorrow if the delegates wanted. He made substantial financial promises, including an amazing 10 million dollar pledge by his teammate Rex Sinquefield. It was a serious speech and he seemed to have done well.

Ilyumzhinov's reaction was as brilliant as it was repulsive. Realizing that the brief speech he had planned would fall flat after Kasparov's inspiring words, he showed what an accomplished politician he is. Virtually repeating all of Kasparov's statements he promised in an exalted manner to double all these figures and that he would not pay them tomorrow but today! As if he had just walked on water, groups of delegates rose to their feet cheering and clapping.

When the voting started, FIDE Deputy president Georgios Makropoulos appeared in the foyer laughing his head off and extremely amused by Ilyumzhinov's speech. 'If Garry thinks he can bullshit by promising all kinds of big amounts while he already knows that he will lose, Kirsan can bullshit as well!' Indeed, when he was later asked by a Norwegian journalist if he really planned to spend 20 million dollar, Ilyumzhinov said that what he had meant was that he had already spent this 20 million dollar, as part of the 80 or 90 million that he had given to chess over the years. Another clever turn, following up an empty promise with an empty boast that briefly left the journalist speechless.

The 110-61 vote was a heavy blow for Kasparov, who realized that quite a number of delegates had left him in the lurch. Tempted by posts they were offered, or by irresistible sums of money, or by the simple wish to belong to the winner's camp. The next day Kasparov tweeted: 'Yesterday's election was a good day for 110 voters and a bad day for 110 million chess players. My thanks to all who supported me and chess.'

NEW IN CHESS

FIDE Deputee President Georgios Makropoulos passes his boss Kirsan Ilymzhinov, who is receiving guests at a party he threw on the occasion of FIDE's 90th birthday.

Another factor that cannot be denied is the big dislike that many delegates and many of his former colleagues have of Kasparov. Over the past years he may have improved his social skills considerably, but too often he fails to suppress his feelings and does not have the patience to hide that he is on a mission. Whereas Ilyumzhinov never betrays how he is feeling, always smiles and is always ready to say something friendly. As the representative of a small federation with many years of experience explained: 'Many people hear bad stories about Kirsan, but then, when they meet him, they think he is not that bad at all. On the other hand, they may be thrilled to meet Garry and then think, I don't think he is such a nice guy.'

For the inhabitants in Tromsø the elections and all the wild stories surrounding them were one more aspect of the Olympiad that fascinated them. Everyone you met followed the Olympiad and devoured the daily newspaper stories. In the first week they were delighted by the excellent start of the Norwegian team and once their chances evaporated, they had come to know other famous chess players as well. With relish they read about the seven players from Burundi who suddenly left the Olympiad never to appear again. And they mourned the death of two chess players on the final day. Alisher Anarkulov, a deaf player from Uzbekistan, was found dead in his hotel room. Kurt Meier from the Seychelles suffered a fatal heart attack at the chessboard in the last round. The consternation around him caused considerable panic in the hall. Groups of players, who suddenly remembered the terror alert in Norway on the eve of the Olympiad, tried to flee thinking it was a terrorist attack and it took some time before play could be resumed.

All this and more the friendly inhabitant of Tromsø who took me to the airport in his car was aware of. He had been so kind as to rent out his house during the event, but while he was staying elsewhere, he had closely followed what was happening at the Olympiad. And there was more to come. The coming weekend two stages of a big bike race would be held in and around Tromsø. The race would be broadcast on television in more than 60 countries. Once again Tromsø would be at the centre of international attention. ■

China
All for one, one for all

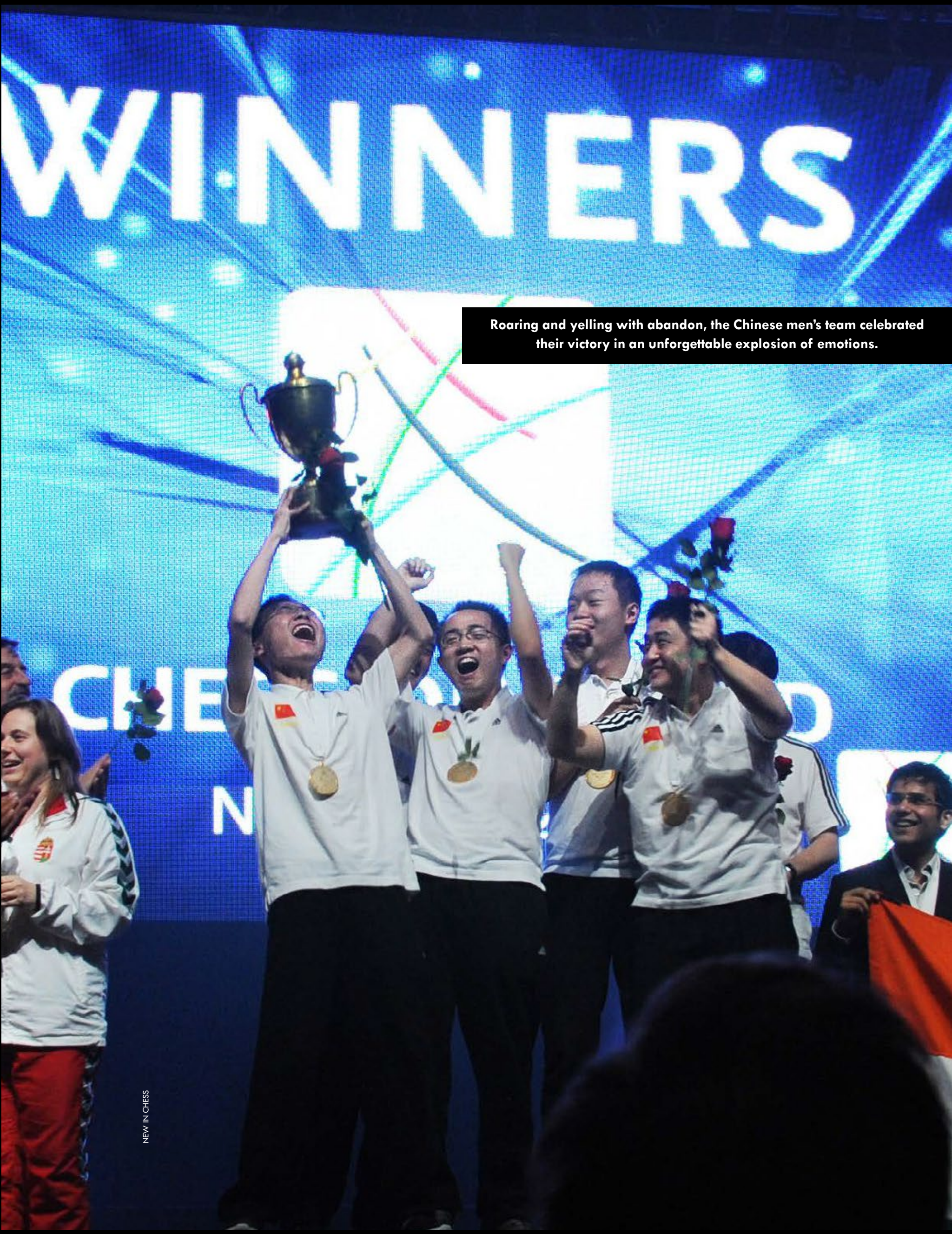
Roaring and yelling with abandon they climbed the stage to receive the Hamilton Russell Cup. With their feelings bursting from their bodies the Chinese men's team celebrated their victory in an extrovert show of emotions that was unprecedented in Olympiad history. China's head coach **Ye Jiangchuan** and WGM **Jilin Zhang** describe the team's unwavering dedication and the bonds of friendship that created a heart-warming success story.

It wasn't the first time the Chinese showed emotions that are rarely seen in chess. Almost 10 years ago, the Chinese men's team was close to winning the 2005 World Teams Championship in Beer-Sheva, Israel. Going into the last round they were leading the Russians by 2½ board points. They only needed one point from four games to make a big dream come true. It was not to be. Sadly, only Bu Xiangzhi managed a draw with Svidler, while Zhang Zhong and Zhang Pengxiang both lost their games. In the last and decisive game, Ni Hua played Morozevich. They had reached an opposite-coloured bishop ending in which the Chinese player, despite being a pawn down, had drawing chances. But Morozevich played well and his win decided the championship. Ni Hua was crushed and inconsolable, and cried his heart out, not caring about the other people in the playing hall.

Later on, when he was able to describe his feelings, he called it the biggest pain of his life. It was this internal impetus that drove him and the whole team and created a unique spirit.

NEW IN CHESS

Three happy coaches: Ye Jiangchuan, Li Wenliang and Xu Jun.



Roaring and yelling with abandon, the Chinese men's team celebrated their victory in an unforgettable explosion of emotions.

This time in Tromsø, they cried happy tears as the Chinese Dream came true. The key to their success was unity. During the entire tournament, the five players spent a lot of time together. They ate together, they took walks together. They were continually discussing their games and their strategies. Despite being rivals outside team competitions, they even shared their opening databases. For each round they tried to figure out the ideal line-up and the best strategy against each individual, which they then discussed with their coaches. By the end of the tournament, they had even created some 'secret language' of their own – words and half sentences that they understood perfectly but were a mystery to outsiders.

Before flying to Tromsø, Ni Hua had a Hot Pot dinner with Wang Yue and poured out his ideas and dreams. Wang Yue at first thought what he was saying was ridiculous, as winning the Olympiad felt like an unreachable goal. But he promised to give his best. By Round 3, when Yu Yangyi beat Almasi from a position in which he was a pawn down, the team sensed that the luck was there and that winning the championship might be possible. The tie against Russia, in which Wang Yue held Kramnik to a draw, was also of vital importance. They had never managed this before and it boosted their confidence. Of all the 44 games they played, they only lost one.

Before looking at the individual players, it may be useful to explain how the team was composed, as many wondered about the absence of the highly-rated Wang Hao and Bu Xiangzhi, who has played so well recently. Wang Hao didn't play because of personal issues. Bu Xiangzhi didn't qualify for the team. The selection procedure was as follows. Ding Liren and Wang Yue were the two highest-rated players. Yu Yangyi is the current national champion. And Ni Hua and Wei Yi earned their spots in the Olympiad qualifier.

The players

At 31, Ni Hua is the most experienced player. As the person who unifies and inspires the others he is the most important piece of the victory puzzle. One reason why he tried so hard is that this Olympiad kind of marked the end of his career. He has indicated several times that this was the last time for him to represent his country. He has seen that the youngsters are doing well and he has also listened to his doctor. As he has been seriously ill, his doctor has advised him to avoid working under too much pressure.

The boys all love football and they like to compare themselves to football players. Philipp Lahm has represented Germany 113 times in the World Cup, and Steven Gerrard has represented England 114 times. Ni Hua is proud that in World Team Championships and Olympiads he has also represented China 114 times. In these matches he scored 17 wins, which is more than Miroslav Klose's overall 16 goals in the World Cup.

> 'For Chinese players, eating Western food for two weeks in a row is challenging, but having the *same* Western food for two weeks is even worse.'

Wang Yue was chosen to play on first board for more than one reason. Not only because he is a heavyweight (although he actually lost 10 kilos before the Olympiad), but also because he plays solidly. At the age of 27, Wang Yue can talk about his Olympiad journey, as he already played in six. At first he played on the lower boards and achieved quite good results. In Turin 2006, for instance, he scored 10/12, with a rating performance of 2837. As the years went by, he moved up from Board 4 to 3 to 2 to 1. Continuing the football parallel we might say that he went from forward to midfield and then to full back. His duty of 'making every effort to win' changed to 'try to ensure that we don't lose any matches'. There he was, on first board playing all these legends: Kramnik, Leko, Giri, Mamedyarov, Ivanchuk, Vachier-Lagrave, Wojtaszek etc. Wang Yue managed 8 draws out of 9 and made sure the team didn't lose a single match.

The future

The heart of the team were the Three Musketeers, the youngsters, all born after 1990, who are seen as the future of Chinese chess. Talking about scores, Yu Yangyi scored 9½ out of 11, Ding Liren 7½ out of 10 and Wei Yi 4 out of 5. Yu Yangyi (20) didn't skip a single match and his performance of 2912 was the highest of the whole tournament. It was not for nothing that Wang Yue described him as a 'godly team mate', as he was able to win so many crucial games and cheer the others up.

Ding Liren (21), the highest-rated player of the team (2742; after the tournament 2754), was his usual self: calm and quiet. No matter what he wins, Junior World Championships or National Championships, he solidly moves on to his next goal.

Wei Yi, the 2013 Junior World Champion, is currently the youngest grandmaster in China. He was also the youngest ever to break the 2600 barrier. Tromsø was his first Olympiad, and he played well in several important matches. As he is only 15 years old, there will be many more challenges.

Three secret weapons

■ In the last few rounds, Li Chao helped the team with their opening preparation from a distance. A grand-

master and rated 2711, Li Chao works together with Wang Yue at their chess academy in Chengdu, in Sichuan province. He worked all night long to make sure all opening lines were covered, providing amazing and unselfish support.

■ For Chinese players, eating Western food for two weeks in a row is challenging, but having the *same* Western food for two weeks is even worse. Not long after they realized this, a solution was found. One of the leaders of the team, IM Li Wenliang, brought a pot to cook Chinese noodles and porridge. Later the team also found nice Chinese restaurants around the playing venue which added more flavour.

■ During the first few rounds of the Olympiad, the official website wrote that the polo shirts of the Chinese Men's Team looked like a prisoner outfit. At first the team leaders wanted to complain about this description, but not wanting to disturb the players they decided not to bother. Once they felt that luck was with them, the players decided to keep on wearing these special shirts. As a matter of fact, they always wore them from Round 4 onwards. Each player only had one shirt, so they must have been quite smelly. But they were our lucky jerseys!

Tromsø 2014 – China					
			pts	gms	TPR
1	**Wang Yue**	2718	4	9	**2673**
2	**Ding Liren**	2742	7½	10	**2831**
3	**Yu Yangyi**	2668	9½	11	**2912**
4	**Ni Hua**	2666	6½	9	**2723**
5	**Wei Yi**	2638	4	5	**2730**

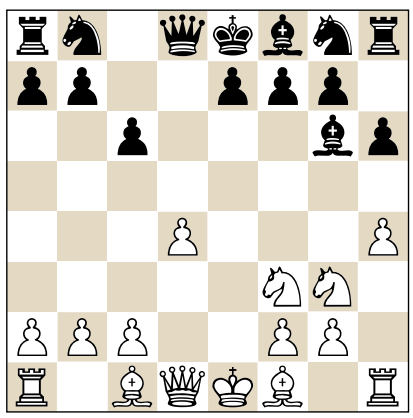
NOTES BY
Ni Hua

CK 11.5 – B19
Gadir Guseinov
Ni Hua
Tromsø 2014 (8)

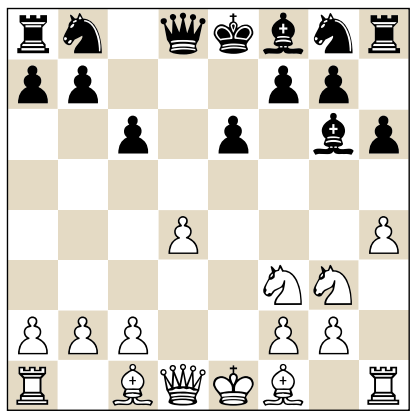
To be honest, I had a difficult time selecting the game that satisfied me most to present to you. At this Olympiad, because of the excellent performance of our 2nd and 3rd boards, our strategy was clear: Boards 1 and 4 would play solidly, allowing Boards 2 and 3 to look for breakthroughs. Looking back on all my games, this is the most 'boring' tournament I've ever played. The following game is from the very important match against Azerbaijan in Round 8. They have two superstars in their team. For a well-known reason the third super-star is missing, but they still are a very strong team, and also a dangerous competitor for the gold medals. They were European Champions last year, so the strength is there. We did a lot of preparation before the round and had discussions about the line-up. On Board 4, against Guseinov, we decided to avoid a serious battle in the Najdorf. Instead, I came up with something unexpected...

1.e4 c6! This was not the first time I played the Caro-Kann in a big tournament, but it is not my regular weapon. Before the round I prepared with the expert of this defence, Ding Liren. We found that Guseinov basically plays only one fixed line against the Caro-Kann, so we spent quite a lot of time analysing it. From his facial impression, I figured he wasn't prepared for this.

2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 dxe4 4.♘xe4 ♗f5 5.♘g3 ♗g6 6.h4 h6 7.♘f3



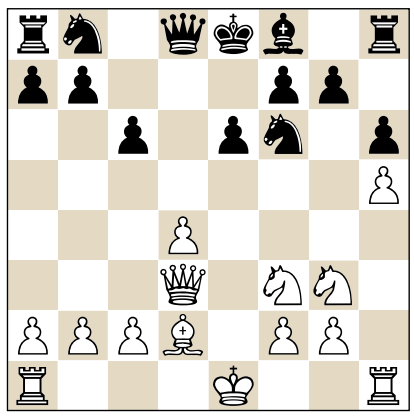
7...e6 This line is rarely seen in Guseinov's games. He mostly encountered 7...♘d7. The general idea of this move is that sometimes, after the push ...c5, the b8-knight can go to c6 directly, which is a more comfortable post. The downside is that sometimes it allows White's knight to come to e5 and exchange the bishop on g6, so that he can save the move h5 and gain a tempo.



8.h5

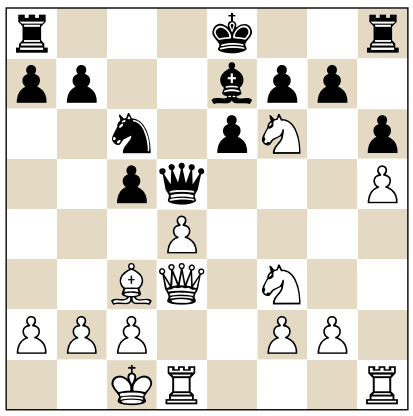
8.♘e5 was Anand's choice against Carlsen. He also played it against Andreikin in the Candidates' tournament in Khanty-Mansiysk, which led to an intense battle. Before the Olympiad, I had especially analysed some games of Anand's and Eljanov's.

8...♗h7 9.♗d3 ♗xd3 10.♕xd3 ♘f6 11.♗d2



Here Black has several ideas. One is to play the regular ...♗e7, ...0-0, the other is ...♘bd7, and there is the most popular ...c5. The difference after the text is that in some variations, when going into an endgame, White's king is on e1. Or if, after ...♗e7, White castles queenside, the king would be on c1.

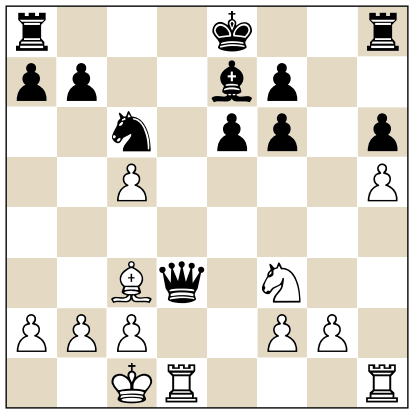
11...♗e7 12.0-0-0 c5 13.♘e4 ♘c6 14.♗c3 ♕d5 15.♘xf6+



15...gxf6 This is an important improvement. In the World Rapid Championship, my teammate Yu Yangyi played against Dreev, who took back with the bishop. After 15...♗xf6 16.dxc5 ♕xc5 17.♗xf6 gxf6 18.♕d7+ ♔f8 19.♕xb7 White soon achieved victory.

16.dxc5 This is a necessary move. White cannot allow ...c4, when Black takes control of the position and starts attacking on the queenside. For instance, 16.♔b1 c4 17.♕e2 b5.

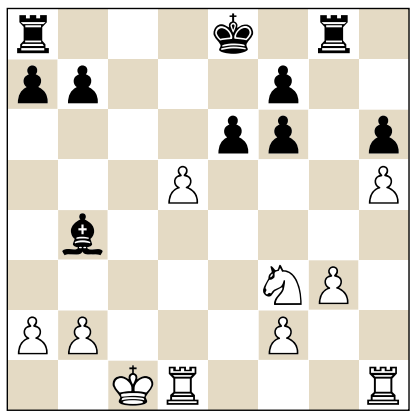
16...♕xd3



17.cxd3 Facing a new move, my opponent reacted very well.

After 17.♖xd3 ♖g8 18.g3 ♗xc5 19.♗xf6 ♗xf2 20.♘d2 ♖xg3 21.♖xg3 ♗xg3 22.♖g1 ♗d6 23.♖g8+ ♗f8 Black gets a good position. White must be even more careful with his bad pawn structure on the kingside. If the white attack peters out and the position doesn't get simplified, Black may get an advantage on the kingside.

17...♖g8 18.g3 ♗xc5 19.d4 ♗e7 20.d5 ♘b4 21.♗xb4 ♗xb4

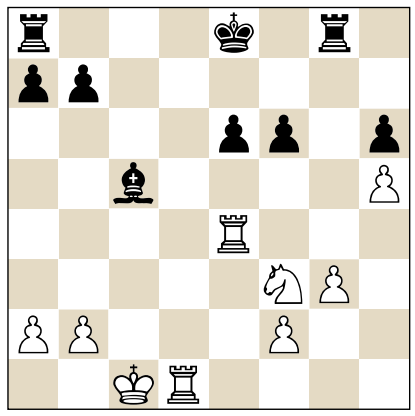


22.dxe6

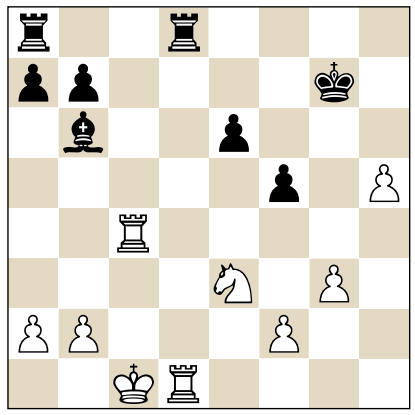
Here my opening preparation ended. I still remembered my analysis: after 22.♖h4 ♗c5, White's pieces are better developed and he has some pressure on e6, but Black can equalize by putting pressure on f2, with an acceptable position. And Ding Liren agreed. So I started thinking from here on, with one hour and 35 minutes on the clock against only 20 minutes for my opponent. The first two games in the match had already been drawn and Yu Yangyi had a slight advantage, so the whole situation was quite good for us.

22...fxe6 23.♖h4 ♗c5 23...♖c8+ equalizes, as after 24.♔b1 ♗e7 25.♖e4 ♔f7 26.♘d4 ♖g5, 27.♘xe6 loses material to 27...♖e5, and after 27.♖xe6 ♖d5 28.♖e2 ♖cd8 29.♖de1 ♗b4 30.♘e6 Black is slightly better.

24.♖e4



24...e5 Here I thought for a long time. I knew this was the crucial moment in the game. White's plan is simple: keep the king and f2 safe and start pressuring on e6. After Black pushes ...e5, White gets to occupy the f5-square, and after ♘f5, g4 and f3 Black will be tortured for a long time. Therefore I was looking for some unusual counter-attack. Actually, after 24...♔e7 25.♘h4 ♖gd8 26.♘f5+ ♔f7 27.♘xh6+ ♔g7 28.♘g4 f5 29.♖c4 ♗b6 30.♘e3



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Susan Polgar Chess Daily News

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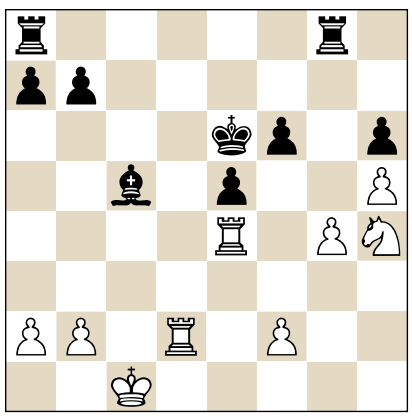
I missed the simple 30...♔h6!. I believed that Black was just a pawn down, but I can simply equalize by 31.♖xd8 ♖xd8 32.g4 fxg4 33.♖xg4 ♔xh5 34.♖g7 ♖f8.

25.♖d2 ♔f7 26.♘h4 ♔e6 27.g4



27...♖ac8 The reason why I decided to push ...e5 was that I thought I had enough counterplay. My assessment wasn't wrong, but unfortunately I went about it completely wrongly. Here I thought about ...♖ac8, followed by ...♖gd8, and also the immediate ...♖gd8. In the first case White's king gets to e2 and when Black manages to play ...♖c2 at some point, my position wouldn't be too bad.

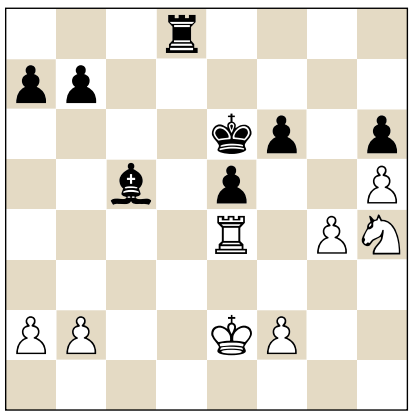
Still, 27...♖gd8 may have been better, for example: 28.♖c2 ♖d5 29.♘f5 ♖ad8 30.♖ce2 ♖d1+ 31.♔c2 ♗f8 32.♖c4 ♖g1, and Black's two rooks could cause White some problems.

28.♔d1 Here he can't play 28.♖c2 because of 28...♗xf2.

28...♖gd8

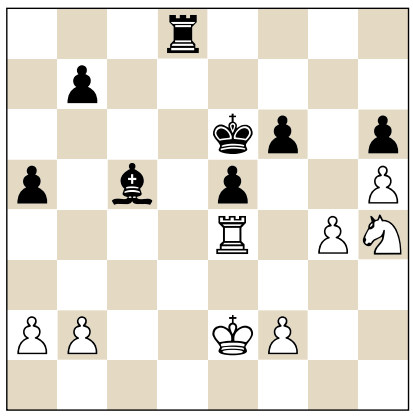
Maybe 28...a5 would have been better, but White still gets a slight advantage, for example: 29.♘f5 ♗b4 30.♖de2 ♖gd8+ 31.♖d4 b5.

29.♖xd8 ♖xd8+ 30.♔e2



30...a5?!

Right now 30...♗d4 doesn't make much sense, since after ...♗xb2, White can play ♖b4. My idea was that after 30...a5 31.a3 I would have a good reply in 31...♗d4. Or if White plays 31.♘f5, Black can respond 31...♗b4 and can still play on.

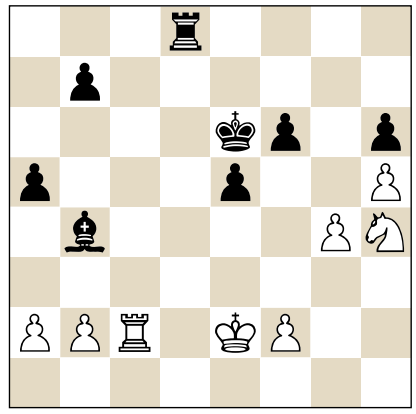


31.♖c4!

I had missed this simple move. With ♖c2 White will protect the d2-square and ♘f5 is going to play a role. Here I realized that things weren't that nice anymore. My neighbour still had a tiny advantage, so the match situation was clear: I needed to fight for a draw.

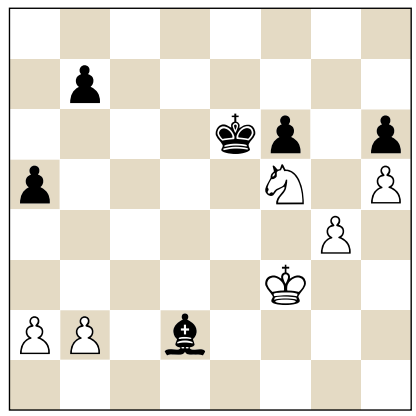
31...♗b4 32.♖c2

Jilin Zhang, our well-informed reporter, celebrates with 'her guys' (she's known them almost from childhood): Wang Yue, Ni Hua, Ding Liren, Wei Yi and Yu Yangyi.



32...♖d4 At first I wanted to go for more active counterplay with 32...e4, but after 33.♔e3 Black's position becomes hopeless: 33...♔e5 34.♘g6+ ♔d5 35.♘f4+ ♔e5 36.a3 ♗d6 37.♘g6+ ♔d5 38.♖d2+.

33.f3 e4 34.♘f5 exf3+ 35.♔xf3 ♖d2 36.♖xd2 ♗xd2

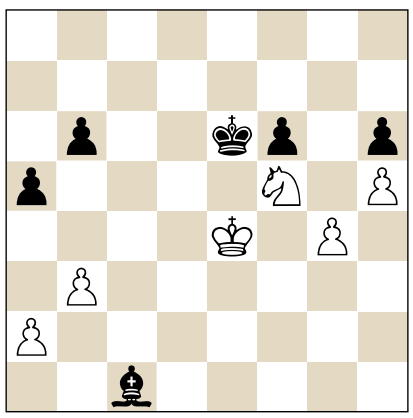


Even though my opponent didn't have much time on the clock, he managed very well and reached an almost perfect position. He can make some simple moves to get to move 40 and then play an endgame in which White's good knight against my awkward bishop, plus his better king, will give him good winning chances. I was sitting there feeling quite depressed and regretting my careless move 27...♖ac8. But then my head cleared up and I told myself that the game was not over yet.

37.♔e4 ♗c1 38.b3 b6 39.♔d4 ♗d2 40.♔d3 ♗g5 41.♔e4

By moving around with his king White has reached the first time-control. In the meantime I had found out that my position wasn't all that awful because of my bishop's flexibility. While it guards h6, my king can head to the queenside and attack the white pawns. Now c1 is a good square for the bishop, because d2 and g5 would both be covered by the knight when it reaches f3.

41...♗c1



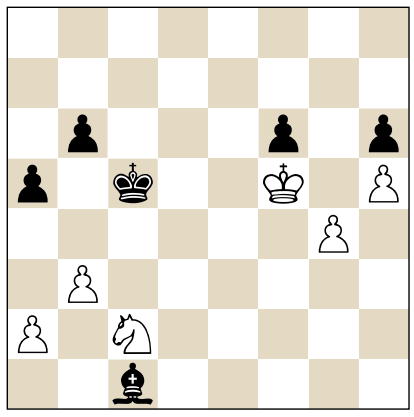
42.♘d4+

After 42.a4 I was worried about 42...♗d2 43.♘d4+ ♔d6 44.♘f3 ♗c1 45.♔f5 ♔c5 46.♔xf6 ♔b4 47.♔e6 ♔xb3 48.g5, when after 48...hxg5 49.h6 Black is lost. But I have 48...♗xg5!, which leads to a draw: 49.♘xg5 ♔xa4 50.♘f7 ♔b4 51.♘xh6 a4 52.♘f5 a3 53.h6 a2 54.♘d4 ♔c3 55.h7 a1♕ 56.h8♕.

42...♔d6 43.♔f5 Here my opponent calculated all the pawn breakthrough variations. I was sure he didn't see any real winning chances. Maybe the better choice was 43.♘e2, to keep control of the position.

43...♔c5 44.♘c2

White has to be careful. After 44.♘f3 ♔b4 45.♔xf6 ♔a3 46.♔f5 ♔xa2 47.g5 he will lose: 47...♗xg5 48.♘xg5 ♔xb3, and Black wins.

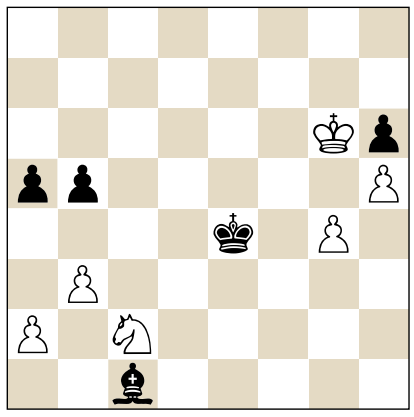


44...♔d5 My opponent had missed this move, which gives up the f6-pawn while going after White's knight. Maybe he had been hoping for 44...♗g5, when he is still better. Because he was still trying to win, he was running out of time again.

45.♔xf6

Here, 45.a4 was necessary: 45...♗g5 46.♘e1 ♗c1 47.♘f3 ♔c5 48.♔xf6 ♔b4 49.♔e6 ♔xb3 50.g5 ♗xg5 51.♘xg5 ♔xa4, with a draw.

45...♔e4 46.♔g6 b5



47.a4

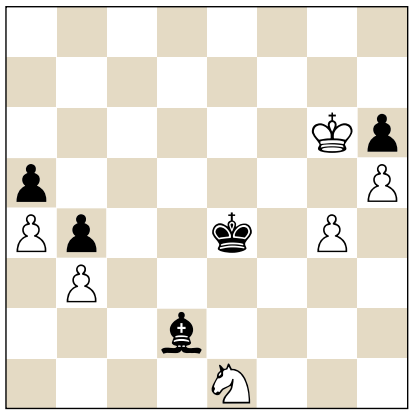
After 47.♘a3 ♗xa3 48.♔xh6 b4 49.g5 ♗c1 50.♔g6 ♔f4 51.h6 ♗b2 52.h7 ♗h8 White is lost.

47...b4 48.♔f6

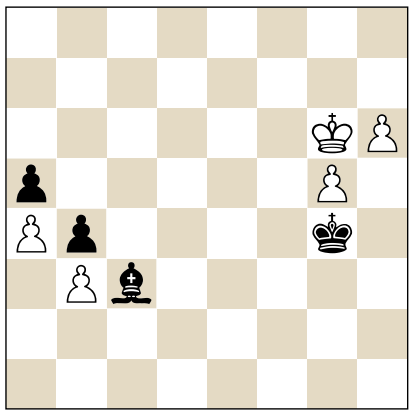
Maybe he had been pinning his hopes on 48.♘xb4, but the black king would catch the pawn, and Black wins.

48...♗g5+ 49.♔g6 ♗d2 50.♘e1

White only needed to move the king between g6 and g7 to make a draw. At this point he didn't have time to inspect the game on Board 3, or maybe he felt that the chances there weren't so good, which is why he decided to give it a last try.



50...♗xe1 51.♔xh6 ♗d2+ 52.♔g6 ♔f4 53.g5 ♔g4 54.h6 ♗c3



55.♔f7

Luckily enough, after 55.h7 Black has 55...♗h8; otherwise he might even lose the game: 55.h7 ♗h8! 56.♔f7 ♔xg5 57.♔e6 ♔g6 58.♔d5 ♔xh7 59.♔c6 ♗f6 60.♔b5 ♗d8, and Black wins.

55...♔xg5

White resigned.

As the third board scored the full point, my victory didn't seem to be so important. I had to thank Yu Yangyi for his efforts. Because of his constant pressure my opponent was affected and made mistakes.

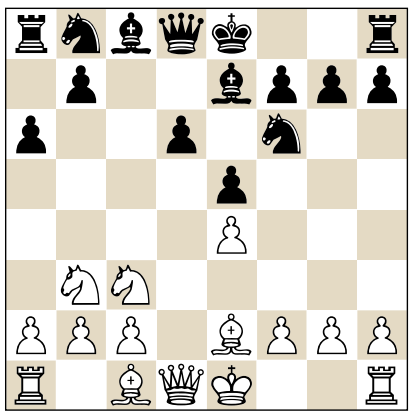
Maybe this was not my best game, but it was a very important match for our team. After this victory we continued to lead all the way till the end.

I have to thank the whole team; we played as a team; we deserve to be champions.

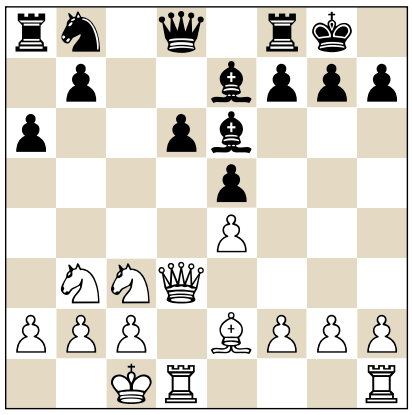
NOTES BY
Yu Yangyi

SI 11.1 – B92
Jan Krzysztof Duda
Yu Yangyi
Tromsø 2014 (11)

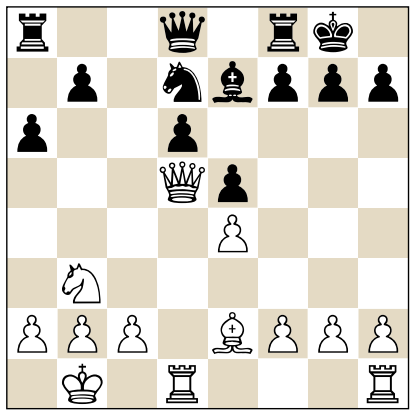
Going into the final round, our team was leading Hungary by one match point. We needed only a draw with the Polish team to be champions.
My opponent was Jan Duda, who had so far scored the same good result as me: 8½ out of 10. I played against him in this year's Wijk aan Zee Challengers, so I was not completely unfamiliar with him.
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e2 e5 7.♘b3 ♗e7



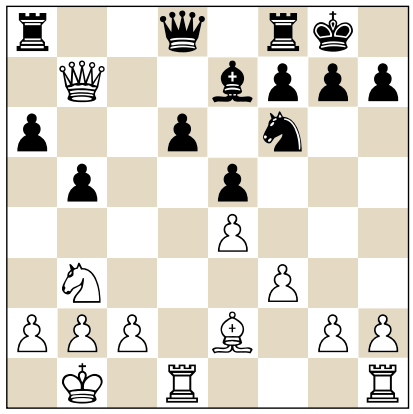
8.♗g5 Duda usually plays 8.0-0 or 8.♗e3 here. Obviously, he doesn't want me to use any preparation.
8...♗e6 9.♗xf6 ♗xf6 10.♕d3 0-0 11.0-0-0 ♗e7



12.♔b1
I knew that normally in this position White plays 12.♔b1 or 12.♘d5. Personally I think that 12.g3 is also a good choice!
12...♘d7 13.♘d5 ♗xd5 14.♕xd5



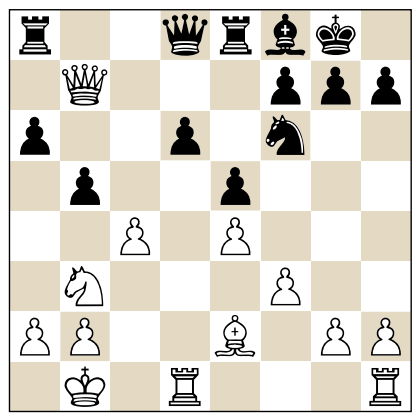
Here I knew that Black usually plays 14...♕b6 or 14...♕c7, but during the game I was kind of worried that this would slow down my play on the queenside. Therefore I chose to push my b-pawn rightaway.
14...b5 15.♕b7 I had seen this move. He was not going to let me comfortably play ...♕c7 and ...♘b6 to develop my pieces. But I had seen a good way to embarrass his queen!
15...♘f6! 16.f3
Apparently, my opponent did not notice my plan. During the game I saw 16.f4!, but Black still keeps a good position after 16...♕d7 17.♕xd7 ♘xd7 18.g3 g6 19.c4 ♖fb8.



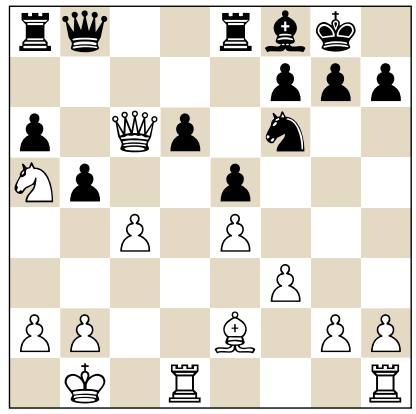
16...♖e8! 17.c4? My opponent had missed the manoeuvre of ...♗f8 and ...♖e7. He should have rerouted his queen via c6, either with 17.a3 ♗f8 18.♕c6 (18.♖d2 ♖e6! is excellent for Black) 18...♕b8 19.♕c3 ♖d8, or with the immediate 17.♕c6 ♕b8 18.♕c3 ♖c8 19.♕d2 ♖d8, in both cases with unclear play.
17...♗f8!

NEW IN CHESS

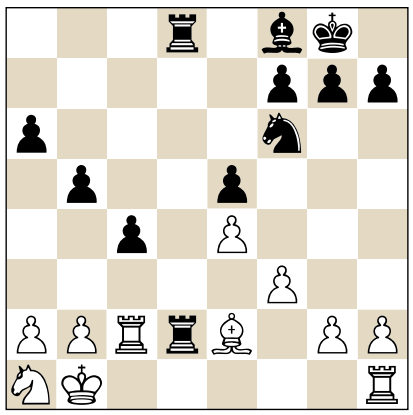
Lucky shirts and team spirit. Yu Yangyi played all games. His performance rating of 2912 was the highest of the whole Olympiad.



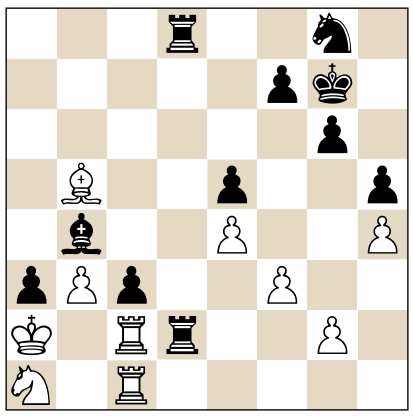
18.♕c6?
18.cxb5 loses the queen after 18...♖e7 19.♕c6 ♖c7 20.♕b6 ♖c1+.
White would stay in the game with 18.c5 ♖e7 19.♕b6 ♕xb6 20.cxb6 ♖b7 21.♖c1 ♖xb6 22.♖hd1 a5, although with an extra pawn Black is obviously clearly better.
18...♕b8! 19.♘a5



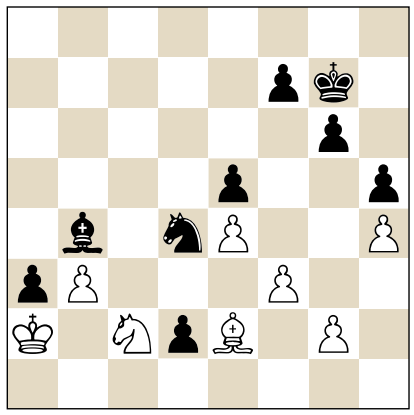
19...♕a7!
A good move, simplifying the position. Things are getting quite difficult for White. His queen and the vulnerable dark squares on the kingside have become a serious problem.
20.c5 After 20.cxb5 axb5 21.b4 d5 White is in deep trouble.
20...dxc5 21.♕b7 c4 22.♕xa7 ♖xa7 23.♖c1 ♖c7 24.♘b3 ♖d7 25.♘a1 ♖d2 26.♖c2 ♖ed8



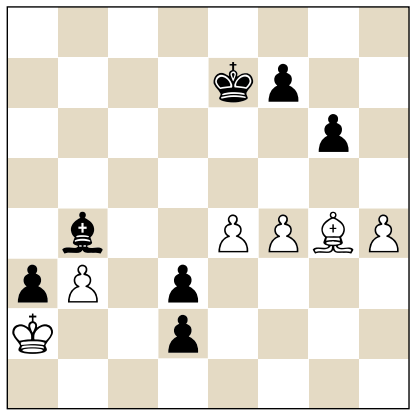
With an extra pawn and excellent positions for his pieces, Black has a large advantage.
27.b3 c3 28.a4 bxa4 29.♗xa6 a3 30.♗b5 h5 31.h4 g6 32.♖e1 ♗b4 33.♖ec1 ♔g7 34.♔a2 ♘g8!



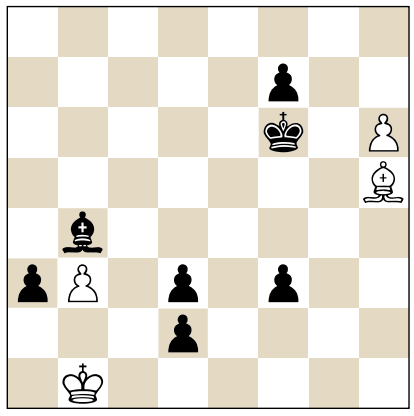
A very strong manoeuvre, threatening ...f5. From here I saw the move 39...♘d4, and my evaluation was that the bishop ending was winning for Black.
35.♖xd2 ♖xd2+ 36.♖c2 ♘e7 Also interesting was 36...f5!? 37.♖xd2 cxd2 38.♗e2 fxe4 39.♘c2 exf3 40.gxf3 ♗e7 41.b4 ♗xh4, and Black is winning.
37.♖xd2 cxd2 38.♗e2 ♘c6 39.♘c2 ♘d4!
The point of my play.



40.♘xd4 exd4 41.f4 d3 42.♗d1 ♔f6 43.g4 hxg4 44.♗xg4 ♔e7!



The white king is trapped and the black king can approach via the dark squares to help with the promotion of the pawns!
45.e5 ♔d8! 46.f5
46.h5 will not save White either: 46...gxh5 47.♗xh5 ♔c7 48.f5 ♔c6 49.e6 fxe6 50.fxe6 ♔d5, and Black wins.
46...gxf5 47.♗d1 ♔e7 48.h5 ♔f8 49.♔b1 ♔g7 50.♗f3 ♔h6 51.♔a2 ♔g5 52.♗d1 f4 53.♔b1 ♔f5 54.♗f3 ♔xe5 55.♔a2 ♗f8 56.h6 ♔f6 57.♗h5 ♗b4 58.♔b1 f3

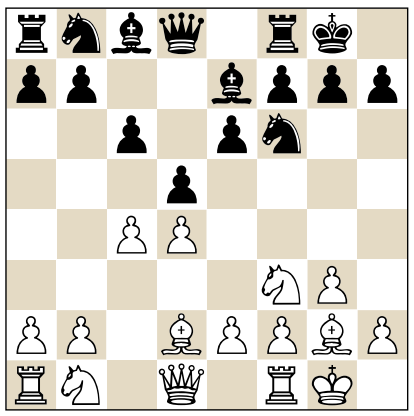


The last move, White resigned. A beautiful finish. We are the Champions! Thanks to everyone in the team!

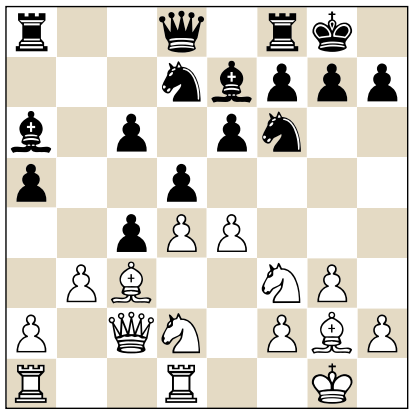
NOTES BY
Ye Jiangchuan

QI 1.3 – E11
Ding Liren
Grzegorz Gajewski
Tromsø 2014 (11)

On Board 2 Ding Liren played 10 rounds, collecting five wins and five draws. This game was played in the final round against Poland. Both our White players were supposed to try their best to play for a win. Ding Liren personally thinks this last-round effort was his best game of all.
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.g3 ♗b4+ 4.♗d2 ♗e7 5.♗g2 d5 6.♘f3 0-0 7.0-0 c6



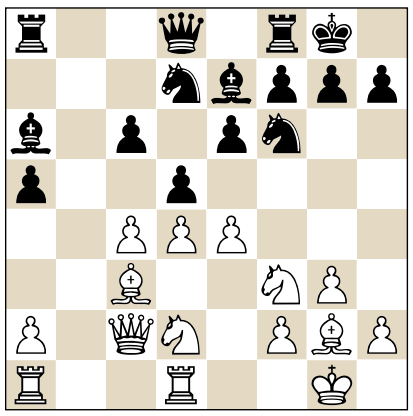
A solid choice, but a little bit passive.
8.♕c2 ♘bd7 9.♖d1 b6 10.b3 a5 11.♗c3 ♗a6
Of course, Black could also consider 11...♗b7 12.♘bd2 c5, which takes the play into a different direction.
12.♘bd2 b5 13.e4 bxc4



14.bxc4 The alternative seems more complicated: 14.e5 cxb3 (risky is 14...♘g4?! 15.bxc4 ♕c7 – after 15...

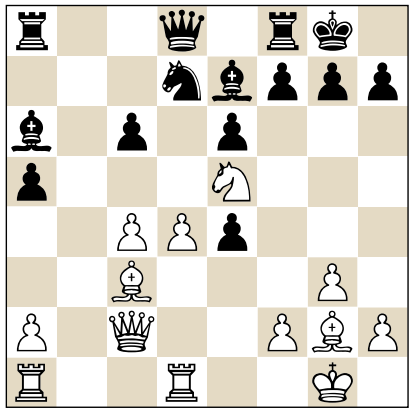
Collecting five wins and five draws, Ding Liren remained his usual self: calm and quite, solidly moving on to his next goal.

dxc4 16.♗f1 c5 17.♕e4 cxd4 18.♗xd4 ♘h6 19.♘xc4 White has an obvious space advantage – 16.c5, when White occupies more space) 15.axb3 ♘g4 16.h3 ♘h6 17.♗xa5 ♕c8 18.♖dc1 ♗b5 (18...c5?! 19.dxc5 ♗xc5 20.b4 ♗e7 21.♕a4 ♕e8 22.g4 White has the initiative) 19.g4, with chances for both sides, although White is slightly better.



14...♘xe4?! A weak move that gives White the chance to extend his initiative. He should have played 14...dxc4!? 15.♗f1 c5 16.♘xc4 (or 16.dxc5 ♖c8 17.♘xc4 ♖xc5, with equality) 16...cxd4 17.♗xd4 ♖c8, when Black has no problems.

15.♘xe4 dxe4 16.♘e5!



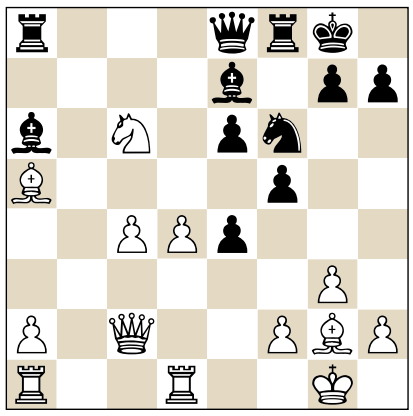
16...f5?!

A bad move, weakening his position. Correct was 16...♘xe5 17.dxe5 ♕c7 18.♕xe4, when Black has two weaknesses, c6 and a5. His position is slightly worse but defendable.

17.♘xc6 ♕e8 18.♗xa5 ♘f6

Black doesn't have enough compensation for the pawn.

He could have tried to keep the dark-squared bishop with 18...♗f6 19.♗b4 ♖f7 20.♘a5, but White's position remains preferable.



19.d5!

He also could have played 19.♗b4 ♗xb4 20.♘xb4 ♗b7 21.c5, but Ding Liren's choice is more in line with the requirements of the position.

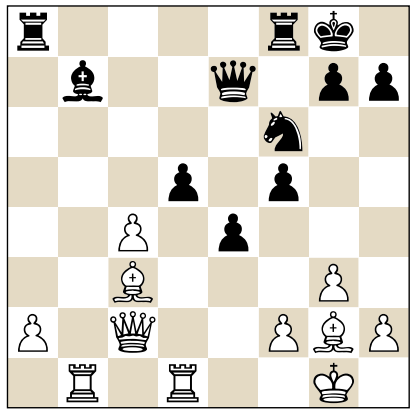
19...♗b7? Another bad move.

But after 19...exd5 20.cxd5 ♗d6 21.♗b4 White also maintains his advantage.

20.♘xe7+ ♕xe7 21.♗c3

Or 21.d6 ♕d7 22.♗c3, with a stable advantage for White.

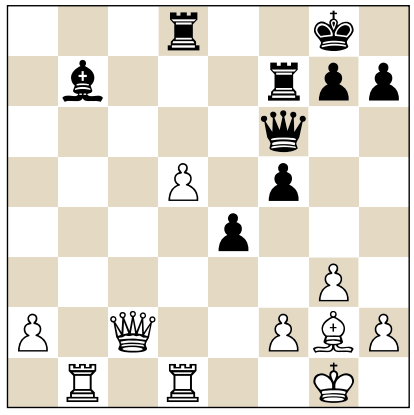
21...exd5 22.♖ab1



22...♖f7 Black would have had better chances to save the game after 22...♖fd8 23.♗xf6 gxf6.

23.♗xf6 ♕xf6 24.cxd5 ♖d8?!

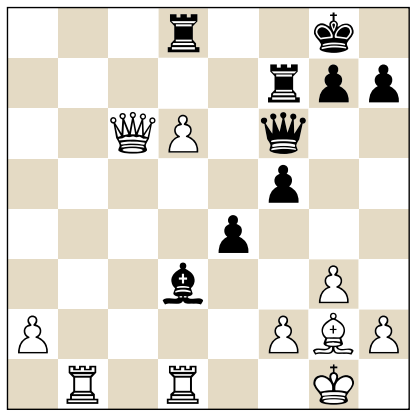
24...♗a6 was better.



25.d6! The passed d-pawn proves unstoppable for Black. In the remaining moves Ding Liren played very precisely to convert his advantage.

25...♗a6 26.♕c6! ♗d3?

This allows the decisive blow.



27.♖xd3! exd3 28.♗d5 ♔f8 29.♗xf7 ♕xf7 30.♖d1 ♕xa2 31.♕c7 ♕a8 32.d7 Ding Liren rounds off effectively. **32...d2 33.♖xd2 ♕a1+ 34.♔g2 ♕f6 35.♖e2 f4 36.♕c5+ ♔f7 37.♕h5+ ♕g6 38.♕d5+ ♔f8 39.♖e5 fxg3 40.hxg3** Black resigned. ■

Nothing can stop the Russian women

They arrived in a private plane, doubly motivated by the organizers' threat to stop them from defending their title. The battle plan of the Russian women was simple: don't lose against your direct rivals and win everything else. In the end they only lost one match, against Ukraine, and won the other ten, including the clash with top-favourites China. Assistant coach **Evgeny Najer** reports from Tromsø.

For us the Olympiad began earlier than for the rest of the teams, roughly two weeks before the start, when a letter by the Norwegian organizers suddenly appeared on the Internet, saying that the Russian women's team was not being allowed to take part in the Olympiad. (The Russian women's team had failed the deadline to register, as they were waiting for the confirmation of the transfer of Kateryna Lagno from the Ukrainian to the Russian Chess Federation. For reasons that they did not divulge, the Norwegian organizers decided to stick to the rules and announced that the Russian team – and some others who also missed the deadline – were not allowed to participate. A decision that was later revoked but which led to emotional reactions, as after all the Russian women were the defending champions – ed.) Fortunately, thanks to the timely reaction of the Russian Chess Federation and the identical position of FIDE, on the first day of our training sessions we received the news – we were going to Norway! Strangely enough, this situation also had a positive aspect for our girls. They immediately sensed the comprehensive support of the new Russian Chess Federation leadership. For example, tickets obtained not long before the tournament would have involved an excursion around various European airports lasting about 12 hours. It stands to reason that such a journey was not the best way of preparing for the tournament. In the end the women's team flew on the private plane of Andrey Filatov, the well-known patron and president of the Russian Chess Federation. A trifle? Possibly. But it is out of such trifles that ultimate success is sometimes formed.

In addition, the presence at the tournament of a doctor, masseur and three trainers cannot be regarded as a trifle. Another important factor in the successful performance was a 9-day training session. As a result of it, the training squad consisting of Sergey Rublevsky, the captain, and his assistants Alexander Riazantsev and myself, were firmly convinced that this team was not inferior to the gold medal-winning team of two years earlier.

Instead of the Kosintseva sisters, the team was joined by Kateryna Lagno and Olga Girya. The transfer

NEW IN CHESS

Of course! A selfie of the winners: Valentina Gunina, Alexandra Kosteniuk, Kateryna Lagno, Natalia Pogonina and Olga Girya flash their best smiles. Did it come out well? See for yourself!

of Kateryna obviously strengthened the team, but also Olga, who has completed a full two-year cycle with the team (she played for us in the championships of the world and Europe) has greatly improved, as confirmed by her second place at the Grand Prix in Khanty-Mansiysk. The recent results of Alexandra Kosteniuk and Valentina Gunina also inspired optimism. Especially pleasing was the form of Valentina, the ultra-convincing winner of the European Championship.

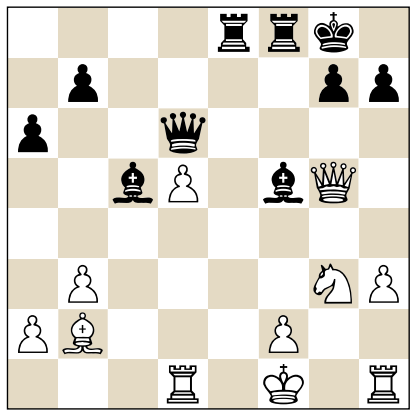
However, our traditional rivals also looked powerful. Hou Yifan had conquered another rating peak, Anna Muzychuk had returned to the Ukrainian team, and the Georgians had performed well in the European Championship.

The four teams contending for the gold medals have been unchanged for many years. The big four could well have been transformed into a big five, but for many years now Koneru Humpy has not appeared for the Indian team. And whereas, as

ALEXANDRA KOSTENIUK

it turned out, the Indian men's team can manage without Vishy Anand, for the moment the ladies cannot manage without the number 3 player in the world.

In fact, in the Women's Olympiad the strategy for the favourites is quite simple: not to lose out in the three crunch meetings and to endeavour to win all the remaining matches. But that's easier said than done. In Round 3 Ukraine drew with Spain, while we were hanging on by a thread against the French, playing our worst match at the Olympiad. On the top two boards we faced a mating attack, on the bottom board we had a difficult endgame, and only Alexandra had a definite advantage. Amazingly, we simply did not have time to get seriously upset: within roughly ten minutes the match concluded in our favour!



Lagno-Sebag
Tromsø 2014 (3)
position after 24.♔f1

24...♗g6 Black had a pleasant choice between the two tactical strokes 24...♗d3+ and 24...♗xh3+, which would have immediately concluded

the game! **25.♗d4 ♗xd4 26.♖xd4** Now White's position is merely lost. **26...♖e5 27.♕d2 ♖d8 28.♔g2 ♖xd5 29.♖xd5 ♕xd5+ 30.♕xd5+ ♖xd5 31.♖c1** And a draw, which signified the end of the match.

After beating the German team with difficulty, although without any particular luck, we arrived at our first crunch match with the Georgians. The course of the match did not herald a dramatic outcome, as in my view we merely held a slight advantage: in the Lagno-Dzagnidze and Melia-Pogonina games a roughly equal battle logically ended in a draw. Up to a certain point Kosteniuk-Javakhishvili and Khotenashvili-Gunina followed the same scenario, with White building up a clear advantage. But while Javakhishvili had to settle for a draw, Gunina once again proved very resourceful and won her game.

Again luck? Undoubtedly. But not only luck. As Rublevsky said in an interview after the game: 'I don't advise anyone to try and out-calculate Valya in time-trouble, even men!'

More good news was provided by the pairings for Round 6: Serbia-Russia instead of the expected China-Russia. What, it would appear, was the difference, since the probability of a China-Russia meeting at the Olympiad was close to 100%? That was so, but we did not want to play with Black on top board against China, especially since the World Champion was obviously in excellent form, the outcome of most of her games having been determined by around the 20th move.

Thus the inevitable meeting occurred in the 7th round. The omens appeared to favour the Chinese: they had crushed all their opponents, the minimum score in their matches being 3-1. And in general a draw would satisfy them, since their tie-break indicators were obviously better.

The key game was undoubtedly the one on top board, where Katya was set the objective of playing as solidly as possible against Hou Yifan, not objecting to a draw. But already by the 12th move it became clear that the plan might be over-fulfilled. That crucial win you will find annotated by Katya herself further on.

On Board 2, after coming under positional pressure against Ju Wenjun, Gunina sharpened the play at the right time and, now in her element, easily extricated herself from her difficulties. The long and tense Kosteniuk-Zhao Xue game logically ended in a draw. It was obvious that the Chinese were pinning their hopes on the white pieces on the last board, where before this Tan Zhongyi had won nearly all her games. Girya prepared well in the opening and a roughly equal practical endgame was reached, in which persistent play for a win by White gradually led her into difficulties.

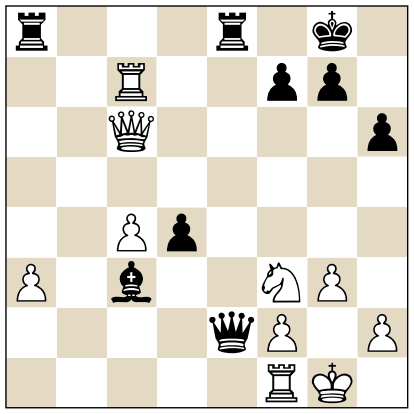
The final score of 3-1 looked absolutely deserved. This was a crucial win in both the competitive and the psychological sense and in general it was the first Russian win over the Chinese for four years! After such energy-sapping matches exhaustion often sets in, but we confidently won the next match with the Hungarians.

8 out of 8, and the only strong team we had not played was Ukraine. So, was the tournament intrigue exhausted? By no means. The Chinese were two points behind, and any hiccup would signify the renewal of the intrigue.

The 9th round match with Armenia was a very difficult one, at one point resembling the match with the French. Lagno lost to Danielian. Pogonina levelled the score against Kursova. In the two remaining games initially nothing heralded a triumph.

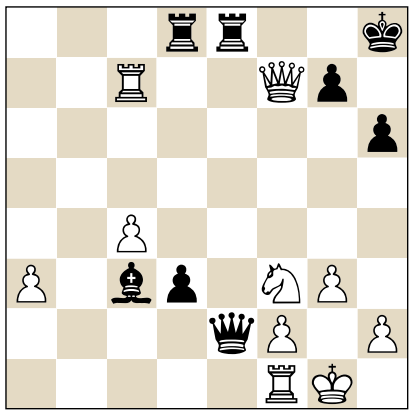
Tromsø 2014 – Russia women

			pts	gms	TPR
1	**Kateryna Lagno**	2540	6	10	**2524**
2	**Valentina Gunina**	2524	8	10	**2651**
3	**Alexandra Kosteniuk**	2531	7½	9	**2639**
4	**Olga Girya**	2484	5	8	**2385**
5	**Natalia Pogonina**	2479	5½	7	**2496**

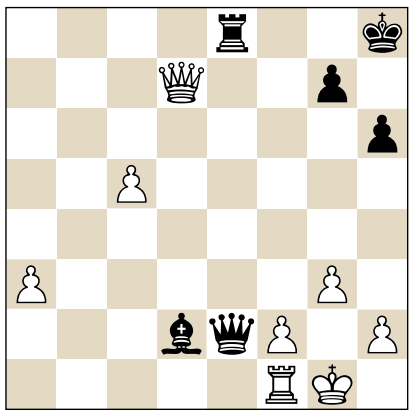


Gunina-Mkrtchian
Tromsø 2014 (9)
position after 30.♖xc7

30...d3 31.♕d5 ♖ad8! Cool-headed and very strong. Now the passed d-pawn will cost White her knight. **32.♕xf7+ ♔h8**

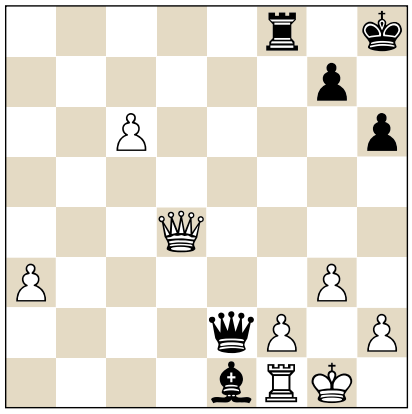


33.♖d7 The tactical acrobatics 33.♘h4 d2 34.♖c6 ♕xf1+ 35.♔xf1 d1♕+ 36.♔g2 ♗d2 37.♖c7 ♕a1 38.♘g6+ ♔h7 39.♕f5 are parried by 33...♖e6, transposing into positions similar to the game.
33...♖xd7 34.♕xd7 d2 35.♘xd2 35.c5 would have gained a tempo.
35...♗xd2 36.c5



36...♗e1?! In the time scramble Lilit tries to break through on f2, but this merely loses some important tempi.

After 36...♗a5 the bishop is obviously stronger than the three pawns.
37.c6 ♖f8 38.♕d4



38...♕d2? It was essential to urgently bring the bishop back into play with 38...♕e7 followed by ♗a5.
39.♕c5 ♖e8 40.c7 ♕d7
After the time control the roles have been reversed and amazingly no way for Black to save the game is apparent. Valentina conducts the rest of the game with computer-like inexorability.
41.a4! ♕e6 42.a5 ♕c8 43.♕b6 ♗d2 44.♖d1 ♕a8 45.a6 ♕f3 46.♖f1 h5 47.♕b7 Black resigned.

And as Girya saved a highly dubious position against Galojan, we also won this match. In general, successful play after the time control has become a trademark feature of the Russian women's team. What is the primary reason – good physical condition developed at, among others, pre-tournament training sessions, or the excellent competitive qualities of our girls, who always fight to the end? I would not venture to judge.

After such a battle we wanted to rest, but a very difficult match with the Ukrainians awaited us. Initially Ukraine performed indifferently, losing 3 points against teams of inferior class, but at the finish the team got on a 'roll', registering some confident wins, including over the Georgians.

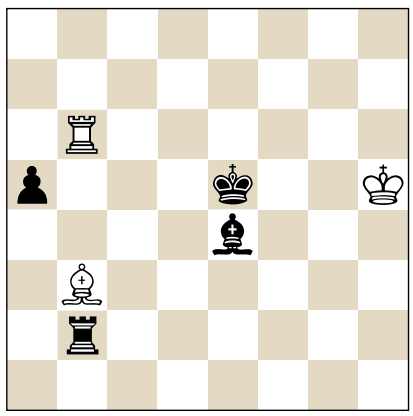
It turned out to be a tough match – it was obvious that one game could prove decisive. And that is what happened. Zhukova outplayed Girya, and the remaining games ended in draws.

NEW IN CHESS

Andrey Filatov, the president of the Russian Chess Federation, provided moral support at the start of every round. On the left our reporter Evgeny Najer, on the right Valentina Gunina, Natalia Pogonina and Alexandra Kosteniuk.

Now it was we who had let in a 'last-minute goal' and our mood before the free day promised to be hopelessly spoiled, but an answering goal was unexpectedly scored for us – by the Spanish team. Which for the ear of a football supporter in fact sounds perfectly logical...

And so it's 2-1 in favour of the Chinese in their match with Spain and on the last board there is very little material left, but...



Tan Zhongyi-Matnadze
Tromsø 2014 (10)
position after 51.♔xh5

51...a4! A pretty finish – unexpectedly White gets mated.
52.♖e6+
52.♖b5+ ♔f4 53.♗xa4 ♖h2 mate.
52...♔f5 White resigned.

Before the last round we were leading China and Ukraine, who were due to meet each other, by one point. Thus victory over the Bulgarians by any score would make us champions.

On paper the task did not look difficult, since Bulgaria have only one top-class player – Antoaneta Stefanova. But fatigue and nerves obviously made themselves felt and as usual we passed close to the precipice, but once again the role of tightrope-walker was performed by Valya Gunina. It was symbolic that victory in the last round was produced by the old guard – the champions of the last three Olympiads – Alexandra Kosteniuk and Valentina Gunina.

Analysing the final table, one has to comment that, as opposed to accidents, there were no genuine surprises in the women's tournament. Russia, China, Ukraine – it was in this order that the teams also finished two years ago. The only surprise, historically speaking, was the failure of the Chinese for the fifth time in a row to win the Olympiad. Surely the lady world champion won't have to switch to the men's team in order to win the Olympiad?

The organization of the tournament provoked mixed impressions. Possibly we were simply lucky, but on the whole we liked the hotel and the food, although the latter was not distinguished by its variety. When on a free day we were invited to a posh fish restaurant, part of the team simply groaned and I would venture to suggest that for the moment the ban on the import of Norwegian salmon into Russia will pass painlessly for us. It was very pleasant to stroll around the pretty town and on the free day to ascend a mountain on a funicular railway and take many beautiful panoramic photos.

But whereas the conditions for relaxation were good, the playing conditions were not in accordance with the status of an Olympiad. Bobby Fischer would never have agreed to play in a tournament hall where it was hot even before the clocks were started.

NOTES BY
Kateryna Lagno

NI 27.7 – D38
Kateryna Lagno
Hou Yifan
Tromsø 2014

This game was played in the crucial match of Round 7. Both teams reached it with a 100% score, but for us the victories had not been easy, whereas for the Chinese team everything had gone uncommonly smoothly. Hou Yifan had made an especially successful start: after missing the first two rounds, the World Champion won her next four games.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3

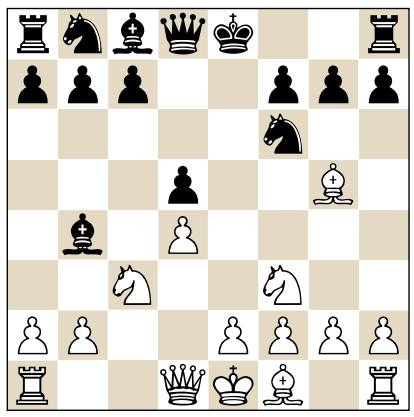
When I played Hou in April this year I did not obtain anything from the opening in a sharp variation of the Benoni Defence.

3...d5

Not a surprise, but nevertheless in recent times Yifan has far more often played 3...b6.

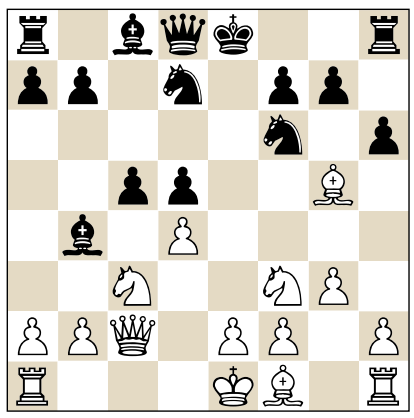
4.♘c3 ♗b4 The Ragozin Defence has served Yifan faithfully for many years.

5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5



6...♘bd7 Yifan apparently decided to try and avoid possible preparations and not to repeat a game from her previous tournament. In Wojtaszek-Hou Yifan Black chose the rare 6...♕d6.

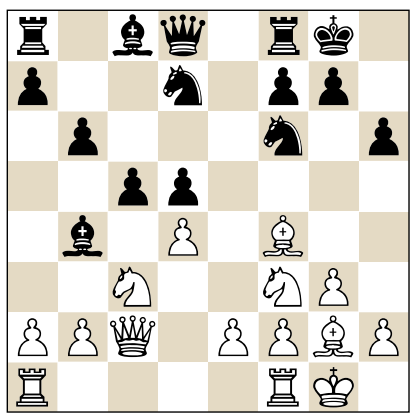
7.♕c2 c5 8.g3 h6



9.♗f4!?

Not a novelty, but a fairly new move and one deserving consideration. White far more often retreats the bishop to e3 or captures on f6. However, it seems to me that the move in the game is far more ambitious and sets Black greater problems.

9...0-0 10.♗g2 b6 11.0-0

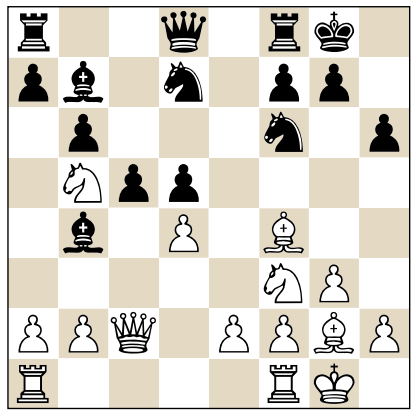


11...♗b7? This, apparently the most natural move, runs into a concrete refutation and leads to a difficult position for Black.

11...♗a6 is also incorrect, since after the strong 12.♘e5! Black's queenside is again under threat: 12...♖c8 13.♕a4 ♘b8 14.♗h3.

Before developing the queenside it was essential to parry the threat of ♘b5. After the correct 11...♗xc3! 12.bxc3 ♖e8 with subsequent play on the e-file, Black would have achieved a slightly inferior but quite playable position.

12.♘b5! Invading the enemy camp.

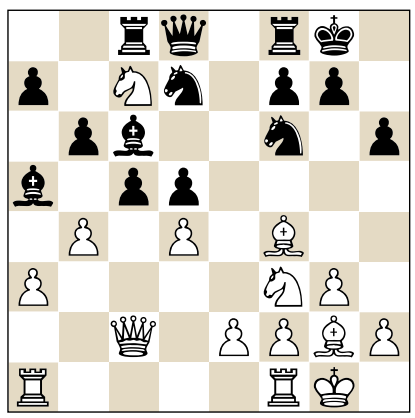


12...♗c6

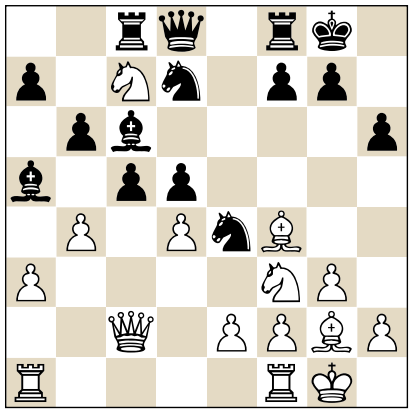
The lesser evil was 12...c4, although after 13.a3 ♗e7 14.♘h4!, with energetic play on both wings, White seizes control of the most important squares: 14...a6 (14...g5 loses to 15.♗c7) 15.♗c7! ♕c8 (15...♕e8 16.♘d6 winning the exchange) 16.♗d6 with a big advantage. 12...♘e4 also does not help, as after 13.a3 ♗a5 14.♗c7 ♕f6 15.dxc5 Black loses material.

13.♘c7 ♖c8 14.a3 ♗a5 15.b4

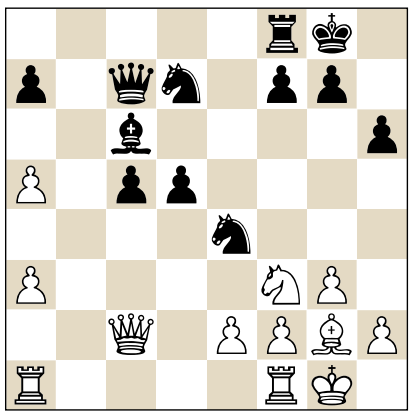
The point of all White's preceding play. It transpires that the dark-square bishop is trapped.



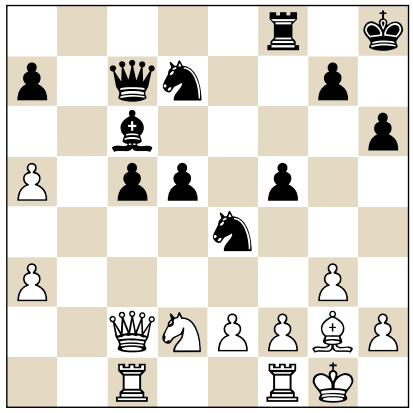
15...♘e4!
After ending up in a hopeless position, my opponent finds the best practical chance! While defending against the threat of ♗d6, Black at the same time prepares one of her own – ...g5.
If 15...♖xc7 16.♗xc7 ♕xc7 17.bxa5 c4 18.axb6 axb6 19.a4 Black does not lose immediately, but it is merely a question of time.
15...g5 loses immediately to 16.♘e6!.



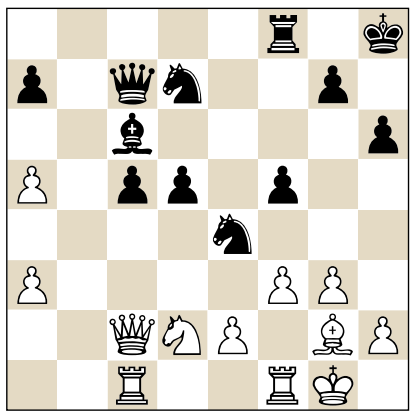
16.dxc5?
Losing the greater part of the advantage. There was no need to rush with this capture. The quiet 16.♘d2!, dislodging the knight on e4, would have won the game: White obtains the desired square d6 for the bishop on f4. After 16...g5 17.♗xe4 gxf4 18.♗xd5! Black loses in various ways, of which I will give the prettiest: 18...♕xc7 19.♕g6+ ♔h8 20.♕xh6+ ♔g8 21.♗c4! cxb4 22.♗d3 f5 23.♗c4+ with mate.
16...bxc5 17.bxa5 ♖xc7
17...g5 is bad because of 18.♘xd5 ♗xd5 19.♖ad1 with a winning position.
18.♗xc7 ♕xc7



Here I realized that, despite the extra exchange, White faces great technical difficulties. The a5-pawn is about to be lost, the b-file is open, and there are no invasion squares. In general, it can be said that Black has emerged unscathed. I wanted somehow to simplify the play, and so I decided to exchange the most active black piece – the knight on e4.
19.♘d2 f5 During the game this continuation seemed the most logical to me, but the computer advises not weakening the king, but retaining the knight with 19...♘ef6!.
20.♖ac1 ♔h8
Prophylaxis: a possible ...c5-c4 is prepared. For the moment the pawn cannot be taken: after 20...♕xa5? 21.♗xe4 fxe4 22.♘b3 ♕xa3 23.♘xc5 White has a won position.



21.f3?! I did not want to draw another black pawn towards the centre, but 21.♘xe4! was nevertheless stronger, when after 21...fxe4 22.f3 e3 23.f4 ♕xa5 24.♕c3 Black cannot hold the e3-pawn.

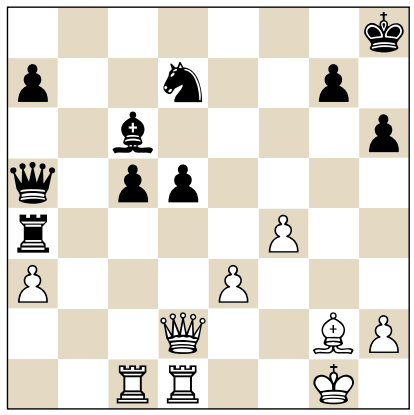


21...♘xd2?!
I was more concerned about 21...♘d6!, after which only 22.e4! (22.♘b3? is bad because of 22...♗a4) retains the better chances.

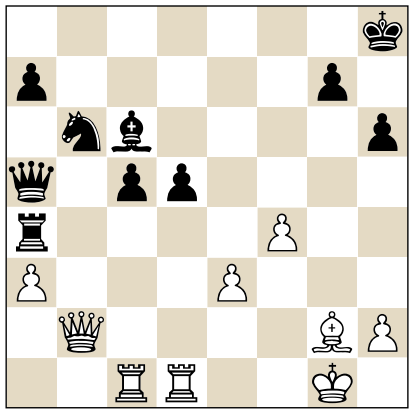
NEW IN CHESS

Kateryna Lagno crowned her debut on the Russian team with a win against World Champion Hou Yifan.

22.♕xd2 f4 Logical: while shutting in the g2-bishop, Hou includes her rook in the play.
23.gxf4 ♖xf4 24.e3 White cannot play without the bishop on g2.
24...♖a4 25.f4 ♕xa5 26.♖fd1



26...♘b6?
The wrong way! Of course, it looks tempting to include the knight in the play via c4, but all the black pieces are left on the queenside, forgetting about the safety of their king.
It was correct to defend the centre from the other side. After 26...♘f6! 27.♕c3 ♕xc3 28.♖xc3 ♖a5 29.♖dc1 c4 30.e4 ♔g8! Black retains chances of saving the game.
27.♕b2!



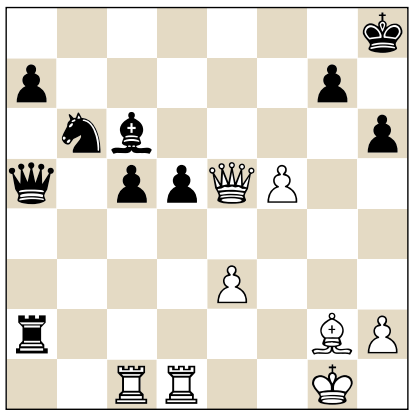
Switching to play on the opposite wing. It is not apparent how Black can prevent f5-f6.

27...♖xa3 27...♘c4 loses immediately after 28.♕b8+ ♔h7 29.♗xd5 ♗xd5 30.♕b1+ ♔h8 31.♖xd5.

28.f5 According to the computer, it was more accurate to begin with 28.♕e5, retaining the threat of f5 and creating the new threat of ♕d6.

28...♖a2 After 28...♖xe3 29.f6 ♘d7 30.fxg7+ ♔g8 31.♖f1 White wins.

29.♕e5



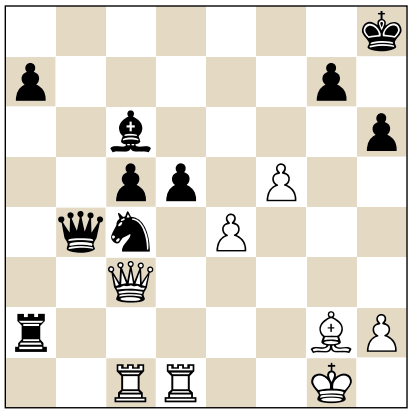
29...♕b4

The best chance was 29...c4!, creating the unpleasant threat of ♖xg2+, but after the accurate 30.♕b8+! (30.f6?? ♖xg2+ 31.♔xg2 d4+) 30...♔h7 31.♕d6 ♕a3! 32.♕g6+ ♔h8 33.f6! ♕xe3+ 34.♔h1, by avoiding all the traps, White wins.

30.e4!

Breaking up the centre. During the game 30.f6 seemed less clear to me. After 30...♕g4 31.♕g3 ♕xg3 32.hxg3 gxf6 33.♖xc5 ♘c4 I terminated my calculation, but the computer shows that here also White wins after the strong move 34.♖c1!, and if 34...♘xe3 then 35.♗h3.

30...♘c4 31.♕c3



31...♕b7

Black cannot maintain the centre after 31...♕xc3 32.♖xc3 ♘b2 33.exd5 ♘xd1 34.dxc6 ♘xc3 35.c7, when the pawn cannot be stopped.

32.exd5

It is all over.

32...♖xg2+ 33.♔xg2 ♗xd5+ 34.♔g1 ♗f7 35.f6 ♕e4 36.fxg7+ ♔h7 37.g8♕+ ♔xg8 38.♖d8+ ♔h7 39.♖h8+ ♔g6 40.♕g3+

Black resigned.

NOTES BY
Alexandra Kosteniuk

SI 24.11 – B85
Alexandra Kosteniuk
Tatiana Melamed
Tromsø 2014 (4)

This 2014 Chess Olympiad in Tromsø seemed to me to pass by in a flash. Now, only a few days after its official close, it feels like a distant event, with many tense games and matches and a happy ending for my Russian women's team.

During this Olympiad, because of the FIDE presidential election, there were many games on and off the boards, and unfortunately our team was in the line of fire in one of those political games just before the Olympiad. Luckily for us, we got to play in Tromsø anyway. After a 10-day training session in the sport base 'Krugloe' close to Moscow, our team arrived safely to Norway.

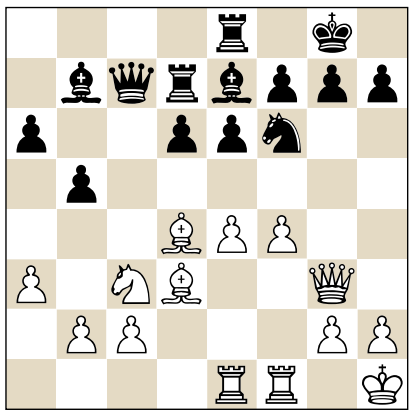
There have been many articles and opinions about the organization of the Olympiad, and I don't think I can add anything new to that. The Tromsø Olympiad was my 8th Olympiad and one of the most successful ones so far, with not only gold medals for our team, but also an individual gold medal and a new rating record in my career.

My very first Olympiad was Elista 1998, where I played Board 2 for the Russia-3 team. From 2002 on I played for the first Russian team and I have always been looking forward to these 'tournaments of nations'. Still, somehow the organization of such prestigious events sometimes seems to be far below what it should be.

Anyhow, the Chess Olympiad 2014 took place, there were winners and those who had hoped for a better result, but most importantly, it was the 3rd Olympiad in a row which was won by the Russian women's team, and I'm very proud of being part of it.

I decided to comment on my game from the match against Germany in Round 4, in which I played White against Tatiana Melamed.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘c3 a6 6.♗e2 ♕c7 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.♗e3 ♗e7 9.f4 d6 10.♕e1 0-0 11.♕g3 ♘xd4 12.♗xd4 b5 13.a3 ♗b7 14.♔h1 ♖ad8 15.♗d3 ♖d7 16.♖ae1 ♖e8



After the first moves of the popular Scheveningen Variation we have reached one of the modern tabiyas. I had already had this position in my tournament practice several times, and in 2008 I was fortunate enough to be able to attend a special lecture

about this line by my then trainer, Yuri Sergeevich Razuvaev.

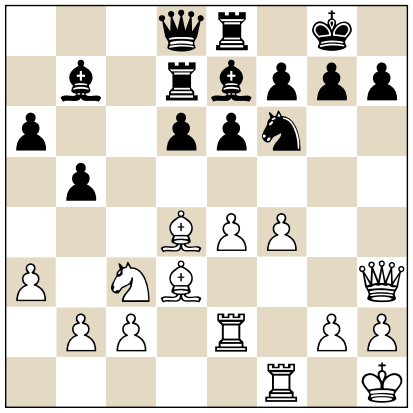
17.♖e2

One of many possibilities that White has here and that Razuvaev suggested to me. A few days later, during the match against Armenia, Natalia Pogonina won a nice game against Maria Kursova choosing 17.♖e3, and a few days before the Olympiad, in the Biel tournament, Hou Yifan had some difficulties after 17.a4, which was chosen by Anish Giri.

17...♕d8

In my very first game with this variation, during the Women's World Chess Championship 2010, my opponent Sopiko Khukhashvili opted for 17...♗c6?! here, which can be met by the strong standard move 18.♘d5! (I played 18.♖ef2?!, and after many adventures the game ended in a draw).

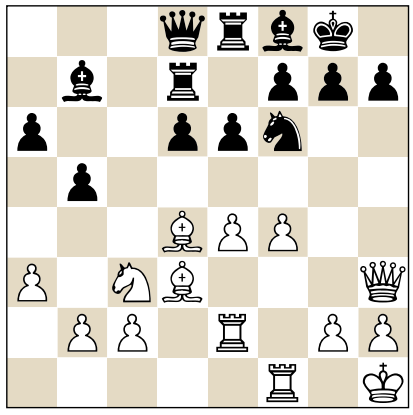
18.♕h3



18...♗f8

With this move Black prevents White from playing 19.♖e3 because of 19...e5, and waits for White's next actions. On the next day of the 2010 World Championship, in the rapid play-off, Sopiko didn't play 17...♗c6?!, and opted for 17...♕d8, but here she was not accurate again and continued 18...g6?!, which gives White the opportunity to start a dangerous pawn attack with 19.f5.

Two games have been played this year in which Black went 18...h6, but after 19.♖e3 ♗f8 20.♖g3 ♔h8 21.a4, despite the fact that both games ended in a draw, Black was not able to show a satisfactory way to equality.



19.♗f2

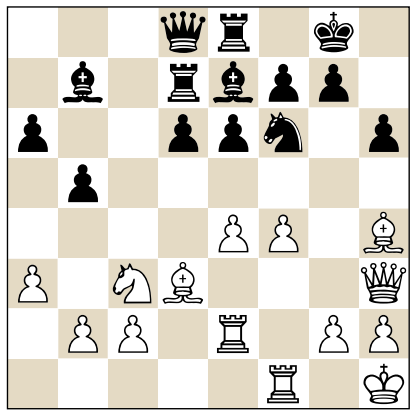
Here we are at another crossroads. White has several interesting continuations. The position must be evaluated as approximately equal. White and Black are both manoeuvring, with White hoping to break through at some point and start a mating attack, and Black relying on a solid pawn structure and the strong light-squared bishop on b7, which may sooner or later start playing an important role. Both sides have to reckon almost continuously with various pawn breaks in the centre, e.g. ...d5, ...e5 and f5. And even though the computer often prefers the Black side, I believe this is far easier to play for White.

After 19.♗xf6 ♕xf6 20.e5 ♕h6 21.♕xh6 gxh6 22.♘e4 ♗xe4 23.♗xe4 ♖ed8 we reach an equal endgame.

After 19.e5 dxe5 20.♗xe5 g6 21.f5 Black seems to hold after both 21...♘h5 or 21...♗g7, although some accuracy is required in both lines.

But also both 19.a4 and 19.♖ef2?! are interesting alternatives.

19...h6 20.♗h4 ♗e7



21.♖e3 After White has transferred her bishop to h4, this rook transfer seems possible. But to tell you the truth, after this game I'm almost convinced that the central d4-square is the right place for the white dark-squared bishop in this position.

21.♖ef2 is of course out of the question because of 21...♘xe4.

Inspired by the 'jumping photos' of star photographer Philippe Halsman? Perhaps. In any case it was clear that team building was part of the success of the Russian women's team.

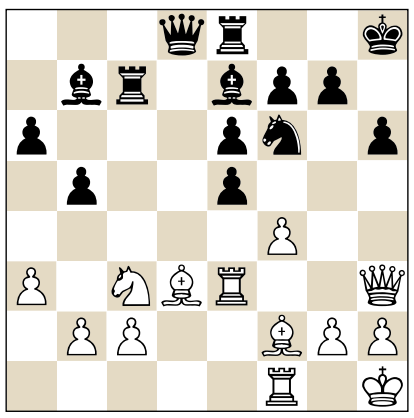
21...♖c7 During the game I was more afraid of the immediate 21...d5, but after 22.e5 ♘e4 23.♗xe7 ♕xe7 24.♘e2 ♘d2 25.♖d1 ♘e4 26.♔g1 ♔h7 27.♘d4 ♖c7 28.c3 I prefer White's position.

22.♗f2 Going back to where the bishop belongs.

22...♔h8 23.e5

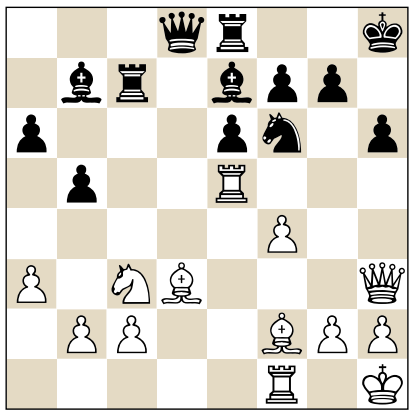
It was still possible to manoeuvre a little bit more with moves like 23.♖e2 or 23.♖e1, but I decided that this was the right time to forge ahead.

23...dxe5



24.♖xe5

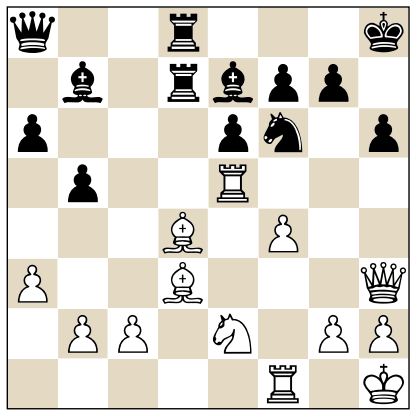
Usually, White takes with the pawn in these positions, but my idea when playing 23.e5 was this move. I don't know whether it's correct, but it's certainly possible ☺.



24...♕a8?!

Black should not give White the possibility to place the bishop securely on the a1-h8 diagonal. The computer recommends the following line for Black, which I like: 24...♖c8 25.♖d1 ♕c7 26.♗d4 ♖ed8 27.♘e2 ♖xd4! 28.♘xd4 ♗d6, and Black has a good position.

25.♗d4 ♖d7 26.♘e2 ♖ed8



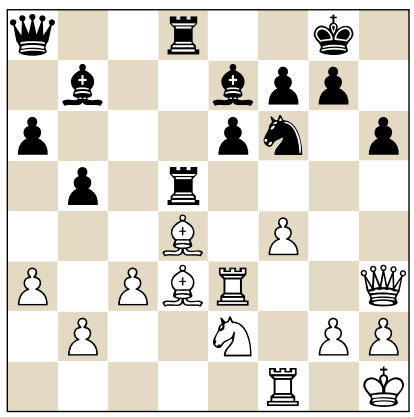
27.c3?! I spent quite some time choosing between 27.♗c3 and 27.c3 and didn't opt for the right continuation. Even though c3 seems to protect the bishop on d4, it weakens the bishop on d3, and now White's bishop on d4 is somehow pinned since it cannot move away.

After 27.♗c3, on the other hand, White has more threats and ideas like f5.

27...♔g8 27...♖d5!? was interesting, when White cannot play 28.f5? in view of 28...♖xe5 29.♗xe5 ♖xd3.

28.♖e3 I didn't like Black's idea of ...♗e4 in some lines, which is why I decided to move away the rook. Of course, the lines starting with f5 are not so strong here, since my bishop on d3 is not protected.

28...♖d5



Here I spent almost 20 minutes trying to figure out what to do next. Somehow I started to dislike my position and was wondering what I had done wrong. But time went by and zeitnot was not really in my plans, so I needed to go ahead and decided to move away my bishop from the unprotected square.

29.♗c2 ♖h5 30.♕g3 ♘e8 31.♖e5 ♗h4

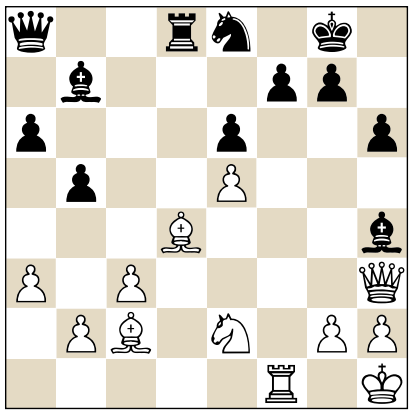
Tromsø women 2014

		Pts	Tb1
1	Russia	20	420.5
2	China	18	406
3	Ukraine	18	383
4	Georgia	17	390
5	Armenia	17	350.5
6	Kazakhstan	17	320
7	Poland	16	362
8	USA	16	339.5
9	Germany	16	304
10	India	15	380
11	Romania	15	353.5
12	France	15	351.5
13	Spain	15	346.5
14	Bulgaria	15	334.5
15	Netherlands	15	311
16	Mongolia	15	307
17	Slovakia	15	302.5
18	Lithuania	15	291
19	Vietnam	14	339.5
20	Iran	14	328
21	Czech Republic	14	319.5
22	Israel	14	310.5
23	Azerbaijan	14	291.5
24	Switzerland	14	283.5
25	Norway	14	268.5
26	Argentina	14	259
27	Belarus	13	300
28	Sweden	13	293.5
29	Serbia	13	291
30	Cuba	13	287.5
31	Greece	13	285.5
32	Australia	13	285
33	Croatia	13	279.5
34	Colombia	13	276.5
35	Uzbekistan	13	276
36	Turkey	13	269.5
37	Egypt	13	258.5
38	Slovenia	13	255.5
39	Latvia	13	255
40	England	13	243.5
41	Canada	13	236.5
42	Austria	13	223.5
43	Belgium	13	219
44	Brazil	13	189.5
45	Hungary	12	289
46	Montenegro	12	248
47	Bosnia & Herzegovina	12	240
48	Estonia	12	237
49	Paraguay	12	226.5
50	Tajikistan	12	226
51	Ecuador	12	217.5
52	Denmark	12	216
53	Venezuela	12	214
54	Malaysia	12	214

136 teams, 11 rounds

An understandable desire to attack and force the game, but it was possible just to wait and play 31...♘f6, and we have a position of some equilibrium on the board.

32.♕h3 ♖xe5 33.fxe5



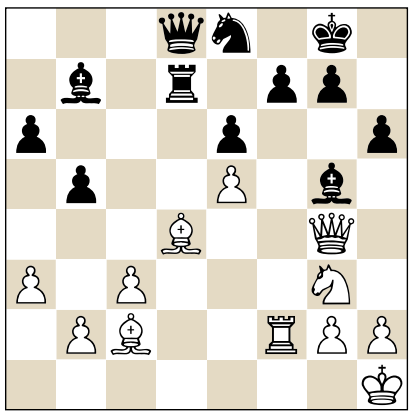
33...♗g5?!

During the game I thought that Black had to play 33...♗e4, and I was planning to go 34.♗b3, with an unclear position.

34.♕g4 ♖d7 35.♖f2

35.♘f4 was probably stronger, but somehow I had other plans for my knight and thought that it was Black who needed to exchange the dark-squared bishop for my knight, since my knight has a very bright future with the coming upgrade to h5 and then the f6-square.

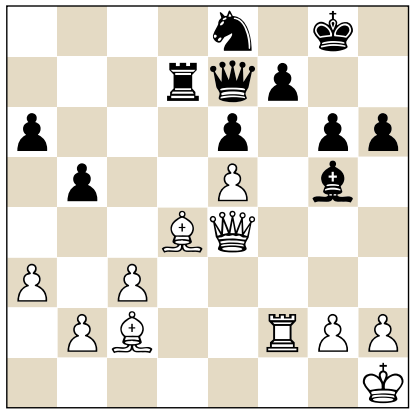
35...♕d8 36.♘g3



36...♕e7?

I was very happy to see this move. During the game I was sure that Black had to play 36...♗h4, trying to exchange my knight for the bishop, and I wasn't sure how big or small my advantage was.

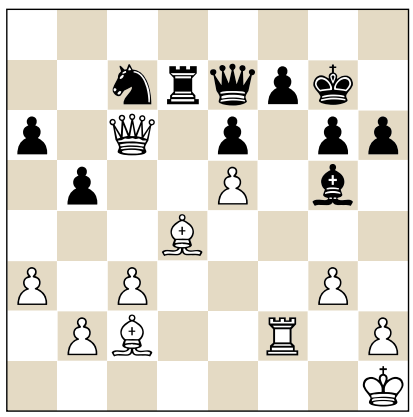
37.♘e4 ♗xe4 38.♕xe4 g6



39.♕c6 I played this move almost immediately and then was a little upset that I hadn't played 39.♕a8 instead. But in fact, 39.♕a8 would have been an inaccuracy, since after 39...♕d8 40.♕xa6 Black has 40...♗e3!.

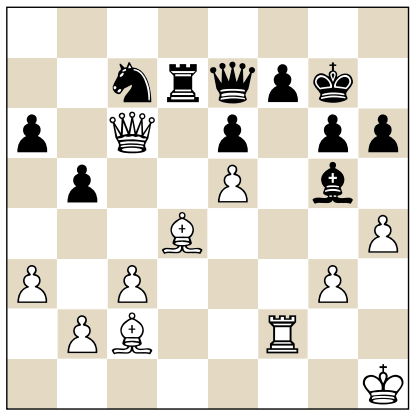
39...♘c7 39...♕d8 was a nice try, since 40.♕xa6 can't be recommended. But White can play 40.♖f1 or 40.g3, first protecting the king.

40.g3 ♔g7

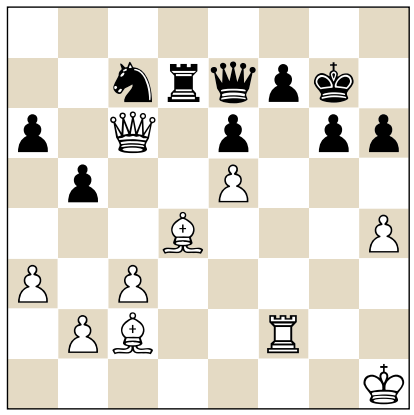


Time-trouble was over and as so often, the 41st move could have spoiled all the good moves made before. Of course, I should have played 41.♗e4, with a solid advantage, but after checking some lines after 41.h4 ♗xh4 and making sure that this move didn't work, I played:

41.h4?



41...♗c1? Luckily for me, my opponent trusted my calculations and played the text-move rather quickly. In reality, Black could have saved the game with 41...♗xh4! 42.gxh4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

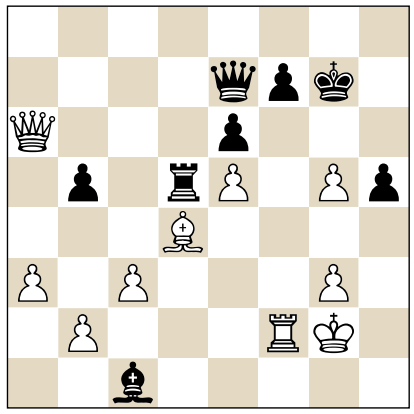
42...♖xd4!! (the move that I had simply missed in my calculations) 43.cxd4 ♕xh4+ 44.♔g2 ♘d5!. But even if you happen to find this entire line, it's still difficult to believe that Black can make a draw. The computer holds this position pretty easily, but any result is possible in a practical game here.

Now the game is almost over, since Black's pieces are in absolute zugzwang.

42...h5 43.♔g2 ♘d5

After 43...♕d8 White plays 44.♖e2, protecting the e3-square: 44...♗h6 45.♕b7, and White is winning.

44.♗xd5 ♖xd5 45.♕xa6 g5 46.hxg5



46...♕xg5? The decisive mistake in a difficult position.

47.♕b7 ♕g6 48.♖f6! ♕e4+ 49.♔h2

Black resigned, since after 49...♕e2+ 50.♗f2 she can no longer defend the pawn on f7. ■

Long Walk to Freedom

Unless you are on the FIDE payroll, it is hard to take any positives out of the 2014 Presidential Election. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov's crushing 110-61 victory was, without resorting to hyperbole, a travesty of justice and a disaster for chess. For the exhausted, defeated, almost-disbelieving challenger, Garry Kasparov, it was, in his own words, 'a humiliation' – not something he has often tasted in his hugely successful career. The following is a brief personal account of proceedings and is in no way intended as a complete history (which would require several entire issues of this magazine). Contrary to the assumption of many, I was not a part of Kasparov's inner decision-making circle and was therefore not privy to many important discussions. My role is perhaps best described as a staunch supporter and occasional adviser.

In contrast to the short, shambolic campaign of Anatoly Karpov, in 2010, which was flawed on so many levels – not least because of the inaccessibility of its uncharismatic leader – Kasparov began his careful planning for this election as soon as the dust had settled on the previous defeat, in which he had cut his teeth as manager. While, beyond question, some mistakes were still made, the level of professionalism of this campaign was undoubtedly vastly superior to the one that preceded it, and the amount of funding roughly three times greater. Furthermore, Kasparov's ticket contained greater talent than that of his opponent.

In the end, none of this mattered. Given the seriousness of the challenge and the meticulousness of Kasparov's planning, I would have bet my house against Kirsan increasing the margin of victory from 2010, but that is, in fact, exactly what happened. It is instructive to try and analyse why. The election is held by secret ballot, so any attempt to break down support by region comes with the important caveat that no one can be absolutely certain how votes were cast – especially now that (unlike the disgraceful shenanigans of 2006) mobile phones with cameras are strictly forbidden in the booth. Nevertheless, due to known loyalties, it would be reasonable to assume, with a fairly high degree of probability, that the Greek vote, for example, went to Ilyumzhinov, and the English to Kasparov. Appointments are another key indicator of patterns: members of the German Chess Federation might be curious to know why Georgios Makropoulos and Israel Gelfer openly canvassed for their President, Herbert Bastian, to become elected FIDE Vice President, despite the German Board deciding in favour of Kasparov. But when one learns that Bastian opposed the choice of the German Board, and furthermore insisted, rather irregularly, on casting the vote himself instead of Horst Metzing, the Delegate, then for all but the most credulous, the mystery disappears...

Indeed the collapse of the European vote is the most shocking aspect of the Kasparov defeat. It seems fair to conclude that he may have been damaged by his close association with Silvio Danailov. All of former Yugoslavia, bar Croatia, the entire four-member German-speaking block, Spain and even Sweden most likely allied themselves with the pro-Kirsan stalwarts like Russia, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Turkey, Israel etc. This was the first time that the FIDE incumbents had campaigned vigorously in what has traditionally been hostile territory and they were spectacularly triumphant. Europeans often hold the conceit that they are superior to Delegates from less affluent countries, but the truth is they are no less venal, when confronted with temptation. I suspect Kasparov didn't do very well with the smaller European federations either. I heard (unjust) criticism that he neglected them. What I never heard from these same small federations was any debate on whether it is ethical to provide lavish financial support to federations of often wealthy countries, with just a handful of members. Everyone fights for his own interests, apparently...

The Americas were always going to be problematic, given the iron grip of Jorge Vega. Kasparov had a master-plan for swinging things around, but when it ran into serious trouble at the very first obstacle in Mexico due to ferocious Russian diplomatic intervention, he had, as he subsequently admitted, no

> ‘Europeans often hold the conceit that they are superior to Delegates from less affluent countries, but the truth is they are no less venal, when confronted with temptation.’

fall-back idea. He also began campaigning there way too late. An elementary blunder was not to assemble a continental ticket, which is generally worth a few votes even if it has no chance of winning. I will not be divulging a state secret by saying that far more attention will be devoted to Hispanic concerns, should Garry challenge again.

Despite this, a couple of months or so before the election Garry considered he was ahead in the race. He was doing well in Africa where he had campaigned extensively. He was also ably supported by an important member of his ticket – Afrika Msimang – an extremely articulate and persuasive speaker with powerful ANC connections. More than once he spoke of Africa as being his favourite continent. The first real sign of trouble, though, began with the brutal removal of the legitimate Federation of Gabon, which enjoyed government recognition – because it had made the ‘mistake’ of supporting Kasparov. It was inevitably replaced by a Kirsan puppet-regime. This was like the act of a vicious bully who mercilessly beats up a small kid in the school yard to send a warning of what will happen if his word is not obeyed. ‘Cross me and your federation might disappear too.’

When the statutes were re-written in 2012, an Electoral Commission was established to deal with disputed votes, as there had been numerous previous cases of abuse of power. The idea was to appoint an independent body to establish and verify the validity of various claims. The FIDE Deputy President, as one would expect, refused point-blank to countenance an independent body, and so we ended up with a political one, with the inevitable tragic consequences. The Chair, Ms. Margaret Murphy of the U.S. Virgin Islands, performed her role to perfection. Every single case was approved in favour of Kirsan by a margin of 4-1, and not one in favour of Kasparov. A nauseating photo appeared on Facebook of the four pro-Kirsan members of the body (Bharat Singh, Darcy Lima and Mwinde Muchimba were the others) jubilantly celebrating with Nigel Freeman in Athens. The solitary dissenter, Andrei Korubeinik, from Estonia, was not present. While it is highly improbable that an independent body would have ruled on all 14 disputed cases in favour of Kasparov, he certainly would have won some of them – Gabon being a slam-dunk example. It is difficult to compete when you are being robbed.

Ms. Murphy defended the nefarious work of her commission in the General Assembly by essentially ignoring all questions. I reminded her that she was obliged under the FIDE statutes to respond fully and asked whether she considered the formula ‘We considered the matter and made our decision’ to be adequately discharging her duties? She did, apparently.

One can often judge voting intentions by simply observing who is clapping and when. It became obvious that the large early gains in Asia made by the appointment of Ignatius Leong to Kasparov’s ticket had been considerably eroded by the day of the vote.

NEW IN CHESS

For the exhausted, defeated, almost-disbelieving challenger, Garry Kasparov, the outcome of the FIDE elections was ‘a humiliation’.

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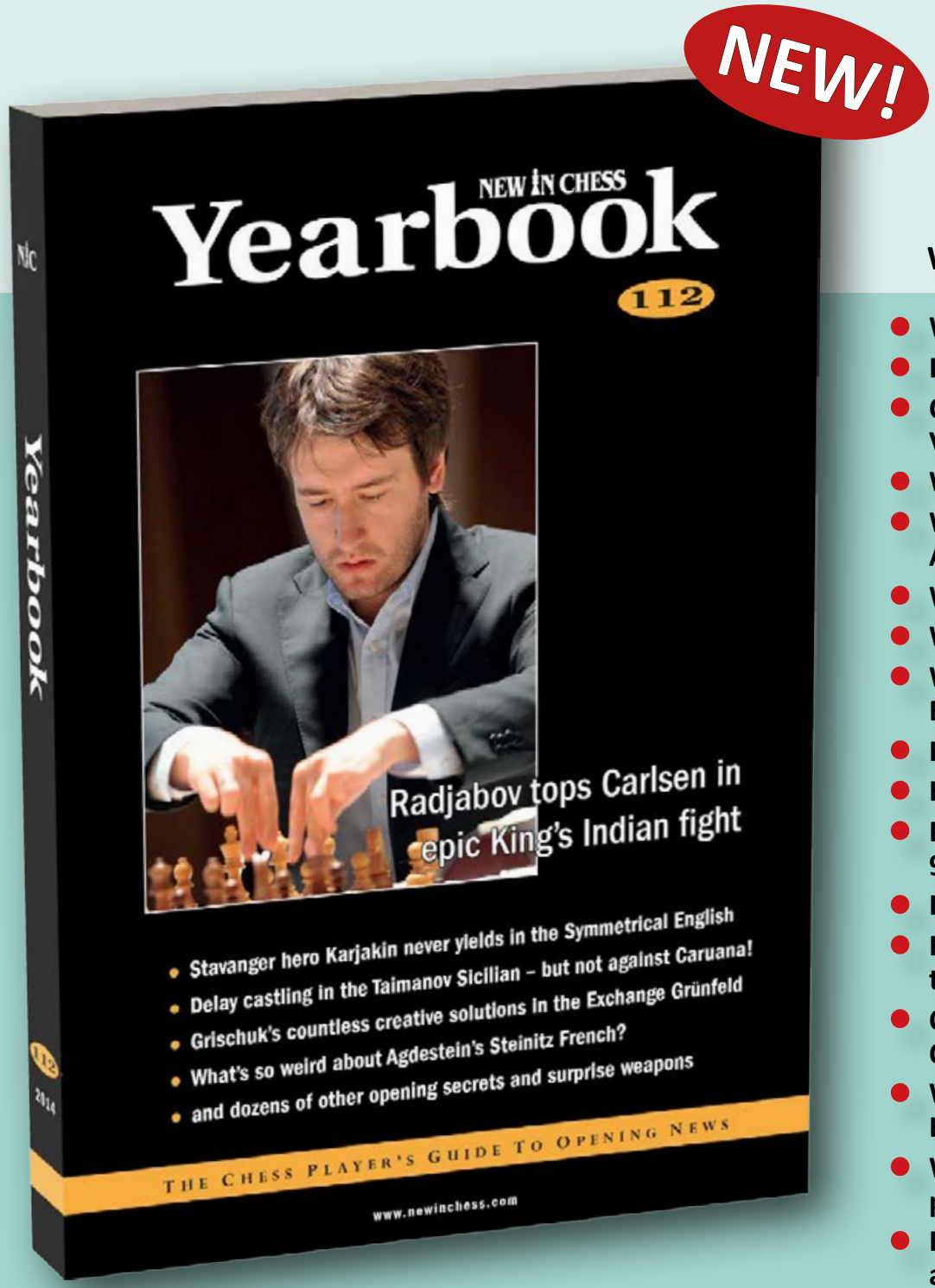
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Russian intervention had been a factor in previous elections, but to nowhere near the same degree. On this occasion, the entire diplomatic service had been mobilised to ensure a Kirsan victory. In several federations it was the decisive factor. Kasparov had known all along that he would be up against the machinery of the Russian state, but even he underestimated its force and how important this would become.

‘Russian intervention had been a factor in previous elections, but to nowhere near the same degree.’

After the President’s Report, I questioned Kirsan about the notorious, undisclosed Agon Memorandum (see New In Chess 2014/2) in which he awarded himself 51% of the commercial rights to most major FIDE events. The attack was, of course, anticipated and Kirsan smilingly answered that it was the custom in his country to sign such things. It was an insignificant act – merely noting that he had seen it – before it was passed on to the Presidential Board for discussion. His answer could not, of course, explain why Andrew Paulson’s signature was also on the agreement. Furthermore it was a blatant lie because the Presidential Board had never discussed the Memorandum. I asked Kirsan when they had seen it. Taken aback, he began floundering and so I repeated the question, ‘When?’ At this point Makropoulos intervened with a waffling non-answer which was intended to use up as much of the 15 minutes of allotted time as possible. Kirsan, regaining his poise, also came back with an irrelevant digression. Freeman then had the bare-faced cheek to blame me for wasting time and the issue was closed without the Assembly ever receiving an answer.

When it comes to making election speeches, it is an advantage to draw black. Unfortunately for Kasparov he drew white and had to speak first. He began falteringly and I wondered whether he was ever going to hit his stride. At some point, though, he began pulling rabbits out of the hat: if elected, FIDE membership dues would be cancelled tomorrow. That was very good news indeed, but even I had no idea of what was to follow. If elected, Rex Sinquefield, the greatest individual sponsor of chess in the world – not to mention the richest man in the state of Missouri – would put $10 million into the FIDE coffers. That announcement received loud applause. With evident pride, Kasparov introduced his team and finished his 15 minutes on a good note.

Whatever speech Kirsan had prepared, it was torn up immediately. Mocking the extraordinarily generous and serious offer of Rex Sinquefield, Kirsan announced that, if elected, he would transfer $20 million to FIDE, ‘not tomorrow, but today!’ The Assembly went wild. It was clear then that the game was up for Garry. Kirsan’s offer was so obviously ‘bullshit’ – to use the fitting description of Makropoulos – that it was an insult to the intelligence. Interestingly though, a minority of Delegates – including at least one whose intellect I had hitherto respected – actually thought the offer was genuine, so pervasive is the absurd myth of Kirsan the great benefactor (who, nevertheless, needed to spend 280,000 euros of FIDE money on his own travel this year). When I later spoke to the new Treasurer, Adrian Siegel, from Switzerland, he was under no illusions that he would ever see a cent of it. How cynical can you be?

What is so depressing about this election is that the ‘system’ introduced by Florencio Campomanes in 1982 is now so well established that it is no longer dependent on individuals for its continuance. Neither Makropoulos nor Vega enjoy the best of health and if either of them were compelled to retire through illness, there would be a queue of ambitious people itching to replace them. Geoffrey Borg, the CEO of the UAE-based Global Chess – the main conduit for payments to both federations and individuals – would doubtless be one of them. Newcomers are constantly being groomed, like Jamie Kenmure from Australia, who is an absolute menace all over Oceania. The embrace I witnessed between him and Borg, immediately after the Presidential Election, was quite frankly repulsive.

Curiously, for a man who has been re-elected by a thumping margin, the position of Kirsan is perhaps the least secure of all. The smart money is now on him being replaced by Filatov well before 2018. There have been previous, abortive plots to remove Kirsan, even by his supposedly loyal lieutenants. Already on the 27th May 2013, Makropoulos and Vega were at the Ararat Park Hyatt Hotel in Moscow negotiating with David Kaplan, FIDE’s CEO of Development, on behalf of an un-named oligarch, to replace the ‘Kalmykian bullshitter’. The proposed price? A cool $26 million. ■

Magnus Carlsen and Norway 1 at the Olympiad

Good at feeling free

Simen Agdestein

'How are you as a father?' I was asked at a press conference on the eve of the Olympiad. Magnus had agreed to let the press come to our training camp, which meant that all the big papers and TV-stations took the three-hour drive from Oslo to Kragerø to talk to the five best chess players in Norway. Now the biggest gossip magazine wanted to write about my kids and how I am as a father. Magnus is such a hot shot these days that just being close to him almost becomes stressful.

However, it has its pros, too. Jan Kvalheim, former beach volleyball world champion and now part owner of a wonderful resort in the top-notch area along the Oslofjord, had invited the Norwegian team to spend some time there with all expenses covered, as Magnus had done before the match with Anand. The only payback was to let the media circus come and see us. The remaining days were supposed to be spent on chess, but with Magnus around the focus easily shifted to sports activities instead. And why not? That's how he became World Champion, and who can argue with success?

The times when we tried to sell chess to the press are long gone. Now a nod from the World Champion is enough and they will all show up. We had a similar experience when Magnus appeared at a kids' tournament at NTG, the school where I've been working as a chess coach for the last 16 years and the place Magnus used as a stepping stone during the first 10 years of his career. This was three weeks after Chennai and it was his first public appearance after the match. With more than 150 kids and about the same number of parents and another 80 chess players in our adult tournament, it was already quite packed at the school that day, but besides them and, of course, the teachers, there were some 40 journalists and photographers, all struggling to get a glimpse of Magnus. Actually, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Culture and the Vice-Mayor of the local municipality were also there.

> 'Suddenly the biggest gossip magazine wanted to write about my kids and how I am as a father.'

'Circus Magnus' is coming to town, the headline in the local paper said when we arrived in Tromsø for the Olympiad. All kinds of people stopped us in the street to wish us luck or to take a selfie with us. Or rather with Magnus, of course, but we, the other players on the team, were also popular and acted as some kind of substitute for Magnus when he wasn't there. 'You have all become big stars now', we heard.

People even added me as a friend on Facebook just to get closer to Magnus. A young girl got all upset when she realized he had left town before she managed to get his autograph. 'It can't be. I just want an autograph and a picture with him. Aahhh, life is so unfair', she complained.

Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg executed the first move for Magnus Carlsen in the game he would lose to Ivan Saric of Croatia.

There is quite a burden hanging on this young man's shoulders and great is my pleasure to see the ease with which he takes it all. Magnus has certainly come a long way with this hysteria. I remember very well how he ostensibly hated it in his teens. But being a fast learner in general, he seems to have adapted to his life as a star very well. He lets people take a picture of him with a shrug of his shoulders, suggesting 'Why not?'.

But not everyone gets everything. Someone wrote to me on Facebook: 'I saw him the other day on the soccer field, but he just snubbed us.' I guess that Magnus simply was more interested in playing soccer, because when he does that, another trait may appear: he hates to lose, even there. Some fans even approached him for a picture just before the game started, hanging over him like he was a puppet. Even that Magnus handled well by politely saying, 'After the game'.

Being in the limelight before the games soon became a habit for the Norwegian team. And after the games too. NRK, the main public TV-channel in Norway, had secured the rights for the tournament and put enormous efforts in making chess a great TV-sport. They came with 30 people, making this their biggest production of the year. Skiing is normally a big TV-sport in Norway. People love seeing Norwegians taking gold medals, even in minor sports (from a global perspective), like skiing.

Chessmania in Norway. Grocery stores sell chess books and if you want you can learn chess with Donald Duck.

By the way, I have to be careful about what I am writing here. It felt a bit awkward when I saw some headlines about a comment I made in the previous issue of New In Chess, something I wrote about not wanting to ally with 'primitive sports like soccer, or even worse, skiing'. My point was just that as long as they don't want to let us into the sports' federation, then we don't want to join either.

This much pride we must allow ourselves, I thought.

In general, we have to be more careful now. I don't know exactly what I had said, but I was very surprised to hear on the live TV-broadcast during the last round that I would retire as a chess player. Was it possible to draw that conclusion from something I had said? Apparently, these days even something you may have mumbled at some point may turn into a big headline. As a result I now have to explain to everyone I meet that it's just nonsense. Of course I will continue to play chess! Why not? If I feel like it. And if I don't, I simply won't. I'm not Kasparov, or Judit Polgar, and I don't need to announce everything I am intending to do. And who knows what the future will bring anyway? It feels good to be free of pressure!

Actually, I believe Magnus thinks the same. I don't think he will quit chess, absolutely not. I think he will dominate the next 20 years. But I also think that he's good at feeling free. He's good at doing what he wants to do, as simple as that. Without thinking about consequences or what people may think. Before the last round in Tromsø he got a little taste of how easily the media can turn around when they wrote that Magnus had disappointed the team and left the Olympiad. That was extremely unfair. We were meeting Malaysia with a first-board player just over 2300. For us it was unthinkable that Magnus would play someone of that strength.

Anyway, Magnus had done a fantastic job for us. He played nine games and scored 6 points, with a rating performance of 2800, which of course is fantastic for all players in the world – except perhaps for Magnus. But to talk about a disappointing performance, as the press did, sounded a bit stupid.

For us it was wonderful having Magnus on the team. It was like starting the match with 1-0. And it was interesting too to see how the reigning World Champion prepares and thinks before his games – because after the games you could talk to him about just any game that had been played that day, at least on the top boards. Of course he had seen them all. It's like reading the morning paper for ordinary people. His full-time second Peter Heine Nielsen was busy becoming a father – congratulations to him for having his first kid and to Victoria Cmilyte for having her third, by the way – so he wasn't as available as normally. But Magnus is very much up to date in everything, it seems. So it's special when he asks us, before the game against Radoslaw Wojtaszek, Poland's number one and one of Anand's seconds, whether he should play something harmless or something bad. 'Something bad,' Evgeny Romanov, our coach for the event, immediately blurted out.

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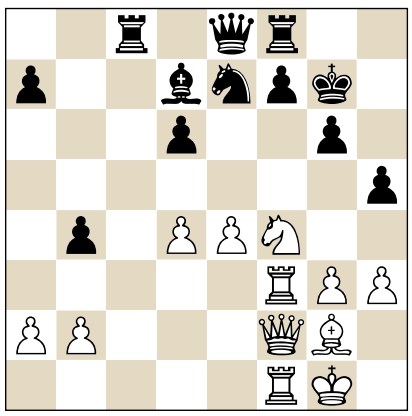
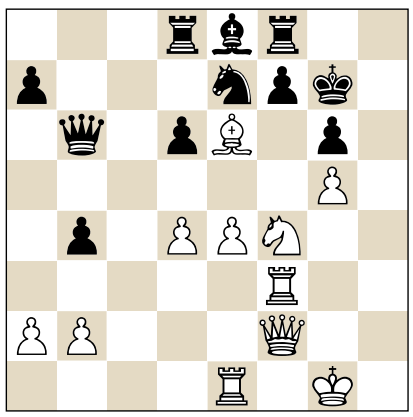
SI 45.14 – B26
Magnus Carlsen
Radoslaw Wojtaszek
Tromsø 2014 (4)

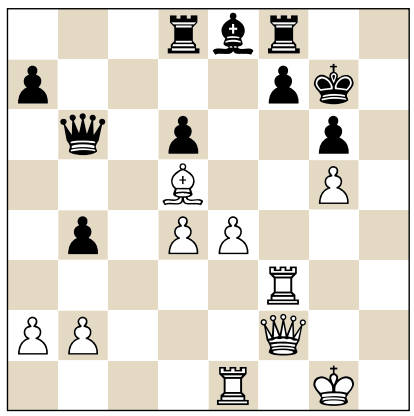
1.e4 c5 2.♘c3 d6 3.g3 ♘c6 4.♗g2 g6 5.d3 ♗g7 6.♗e3 e5 7.♘h3!? The result of an energy-saving preparation, I guess. **7...♘ge7 8.f4 ♘d4 9.0-0 0-0 10.♕d2 ♗d7 11.♘d1 ♕c8?!** The preparation is bearing fruit. Wojtaszek seems confused. **12.♘df2 ♘dc6 13.c3 b5 14.fxe5 ♘xe5 15.♗h6 ♘7c6 16.♗xg7 ♔xg7 17.♘f4 ♕d8 18.♖ad1 ♖c8 19.♕e2 h5 20.d4 cxd4 21.cxd4 ♘g4 22.h3 ♘xf2 23.♕xf2** Magnus suddenly has a wonderful position with control in the centre, an open f-file for his artillery and nice pieces. How did that happen so quickly? **23...♘e7 24.♖d3 b4 25.♖f3 ♕e8?** The Pole feels the pressure on f7, I guess, but this is just horrible.



26.g4!? This says a lot about Magnus' way of thinking. 26.d5 a5 27.♕b6 just wins a pawn and is the computer's first choice, but Magnus said he just thought that his move looked so nice that he didn't linger much on the alternatives. Magnus loves harmony more than material. Kasparov happened to pass by just around here and from the smile that appeared on his face it was clear that he must have been very pleased. **26...hxg4 27.hxg4 ♗b5** 27...♗xg4 28.♖g3 ♕d7 29.♗h3 is big trouble for Black. **28.♖e1 ♕d8 29.g5 ♕b6 30.♗h3 ♖cd8 31.♗e6 ♗e8**



32.♘d5 Another interesting decision. The computer points out a forced mate after 32.♖h3, for instance 32...♖h8 33.♗xf7! ♖xh3 34.♘e6+ ♔h7 35.♘f8+ ♔g7 36.♕f6+ ♔xf8 37.♗d5+ or 32...♗d7 33.♘h5+ gxh5 34.♕f6+ ♔g8 35.♖xh5, and mate either way. I don't think Magnus even bothered to calculate. He simply went for harmony. **32...♘xd5 33.♗xd5**



And Wojtaszek resigned before the invasion on the f- and h-lines.

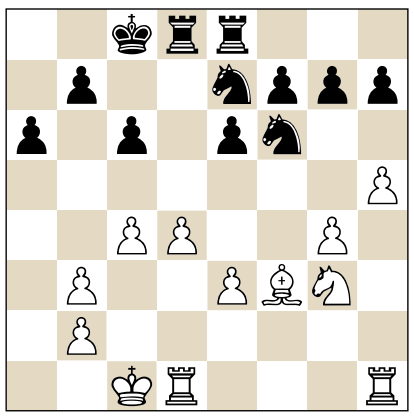
Against Fabiano Caruana, Magnus played what someone had played against him in his first game in Tromsø. Magnus was a bit worse, and then just won. How does he manage to do such things? Even against the number three in the world?

GEIR OLSEN/VG

'The remaining days were supposed to be spent on chess, but with Magnus around the focus easily shifted to sports activities instead. And why not?'

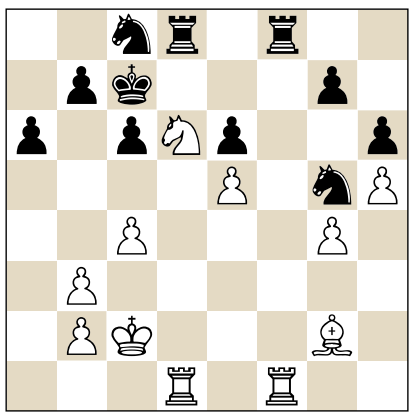
Tromsø 2014 – Norway

			pts	gms	TPR
1	**Magnus Carlsen**	2877	6	9	**2799**
2	**Simen Agdestein**	2630	5	9	**2556**
3	**Jon Ludvig Hammer**	2628	6½	10	**2630**
4	**Leif Erlend Johannessen**	2528	4½	8	**2486**
5	**Kjetil Lie**	2528	3½	8	**2422**



Caruana-Carlsen
Tromsø 2014 (6)
position after 21... ♘e7

It looks much better for White, doesn't it? In just a few moves' time the picture will have changed completely. **22.e4 h6 23.e5 ♘h7 24.♘e4 ♖f8 25.♘d6+** I think Caruana was very optimistic here with such a knight in the heart of Black's position. **25...♔c7 26.♗g2 ♘g5** This knight is just as strong as the one on d6, it turns out. **27.♖hf1 f6!** Black is the only one who can do something here. **28.♔c2 fxe5 29.dxe5 ♘c8**

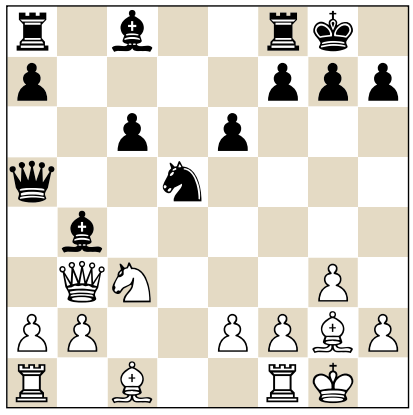


30.c5?! Magnus felt this was a mistake and that after 30.♘e4 it would have been equal. **30...♘e7 31.b4** The machine doesn't like this, as White needs to take on d5 on the next move. **31...♘d5 32.♗xd5 cxd5 33.b5 axb5** Knight or rook to f3 is in the air, while White actually is struggling to find coordination. **34.♘xb5+ ♔c6 35.♘d6 ♘f3** 35...♖f3 is strong too. **36.b4** 36.♘f5 exf5 37.♖xf3 fxg4 38.♖g3 was perhaps Caruana's last chance to fight on. **36...♖a8** Not 36...♘xe5 37.♖fe1. **37.♖a1 ♖xa1 38.♖xa1 ♘xe5** Pawn up, and the rest is just simple, as Magnus illustrated by playing fast and easily. **39.♖a7 ♖b8 40.♖a3 b6 41.♖a7 bxc5 42.♖a6+ ♔c7 43.bxc5 ♘d7 44.♖a7+ ♔c6 45.g5 ♘xc5 46.♘f7 d4 47.♘e5+ ♔d5 48.♘d7 d3+ 49.♔c1 ♘xd7 50.♖xd7+ ♔e4** 51.♖xg7 ♔e3, and the d-pawn decides. White resigned.

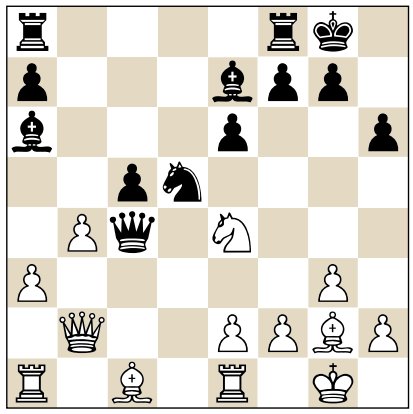
Magnus actually lost two games this time. The first one against Germany's top player, Arkadij Naiditsch, seemed very unfair, as Magnus actually played a great game, at least as far as the first part was concerned.

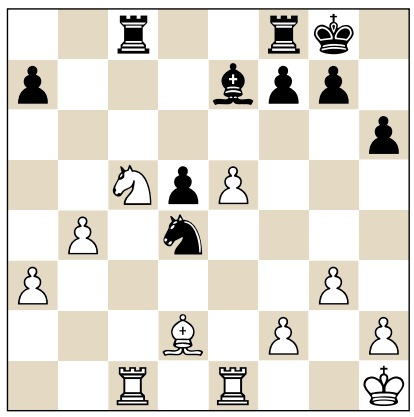
EO 44.12 – E21
Magnus Carlsen
Arkadij Naiditsch
Tromsø 2014 (7)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 ♗b4 4.♘f3 c5 5.g3 0-0 6.♗g2 cxd4 7.♘xd4 d5 8.cxd5 ♘xd5 9.♕b3 ♘c6 10.♘xc6 bxc6 11.0-0 ♕a5



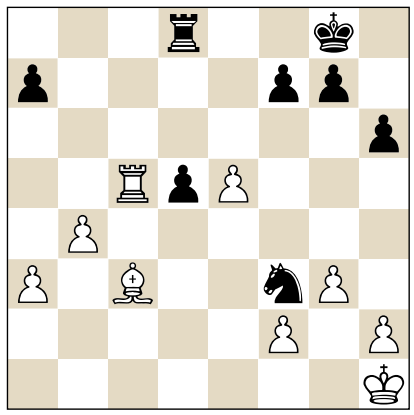
12.♘e4!? This may be of theoretical importance. Before the debate started with 12.♗d2. **12...♗a6 13.♕c2 h6 14.a3 ♗e7 15.b4! ♕b5** Both 15...♘xb4 16.axb4 ♕xa1 17.♗g5 and 15...♗xb4 16.axb4 ♕xa1 17.♗b2 ♕a2 18.♘d2 are just bad for Black. **16.♖e1 ♕c4 17.♕b2 c5**



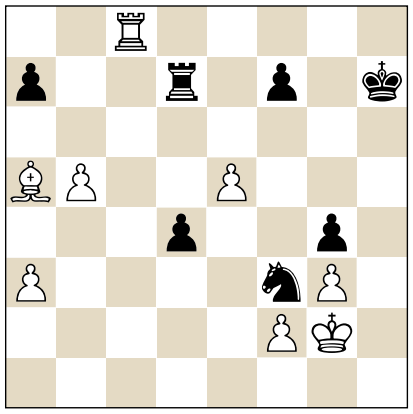


18.♘xc5! ♗f6 18...♗xc5 19.bxc5 ♕xc5 20.♗d2 will yield White a slight but clear advantage due to the bishop pair. **19.♕a2 ♖ac8** 19...♗xa1 20.♕xa1, followed by ♗b2 or e4 and ♗f1, is fantastic for White. Which means something has gone horribly wrong for Black. **20.e4 ♘c3 21.♕xc4 ♗xc4 22.e5 ♗e7 23.♗d2** 23.♗e3 looks very natural, with just a clear pawn up for nothing. **23...♘e2+ 24.♔h1 ♘d4 25.♖ac1 ♗d5 26.♗xd5 exd5**

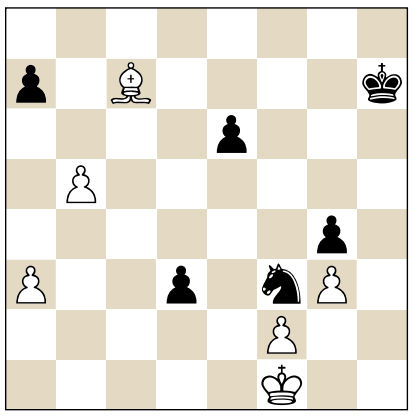
27.♘d7 It's still a clear pawn up, but now it becomes messier. **27...♖xc1 28.♖xc1 ♖d8 29.♘c5** 29.♖c7 is decisive, according to the machine, which continues with 29...♘b5 30.♖b7 ♘xa3 31.♖xa7 ♘c4 32.b5! ♘xd2 33.b6, and Black has to play 33...♖c8 34.b7 ♖c1+ 35.♔g2 ♖b1 just to be able to give a rook for the pawn. But this is a long line, and normally it makes sense to do things more simply than this. **29...♗xc5 30.♖xc5 ♘f3 31.♗c3**



31...g5! Black manages to keep the knight on f3, and suddenly has a dramatically strong passed d-pawn. **32.h3 h5 33.♔g2 g4 34.b5 ♖d7 35.♖c8+ ♔h7 36.♗a5 d4 37.hxg4 hxg4**



38.e6? Magnus still thought he was winning, but he had overlooked Black's 41st move. **38...fxe6 39.♖c7** The point of the previous move, but it doesn't work. **39...♖xc7 40.♗xc7 d3 41.♔f1**

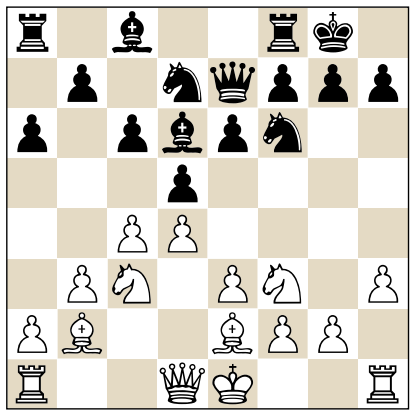


41...♘d4! An unpleasant surprise. **42.♔e1** Forced, but now it's Naiditsch who's on top, and he plays the rest excellently. **42...♘xb5 43.♗b8 ♘xa3 44.♔d2 a5 45.♔xd3 ♔g6 46.♔e4 a4 47.♗e5 ♘c4 48.♗c3 a3 49.♔f4 ♔h5 50.f3 e5+ 51.♔e4 ♘d6+ 52.♔e3 ♔g5 53.fxg4 e4 54.♔d2 ♘b5 55.♗e5 ♔xg4 56.♔e3 ♔f5 57.♗a1 ♘d6 58.♔d2 ♔g4 59.♔e3 a2 60.♗c3 ♔xg3 61.♗a1 ♔g4 62.♔d2 ♔f3 0-1**

I made some bad mistakes too, as usual, and was wondering if the stress of talking to about six different cameras after each game influenced my play. I was tired, but I thought it was just me being old or something. So, great was my surprise when even Magnus got extremely tired at the end. In his last game but one he somehow won against Dragan Solak from Turkey from a very bad position. We

'Great was my surprise when even Magnus got extremely tired at the end.'

could feel it happening already in the diagrammed position:

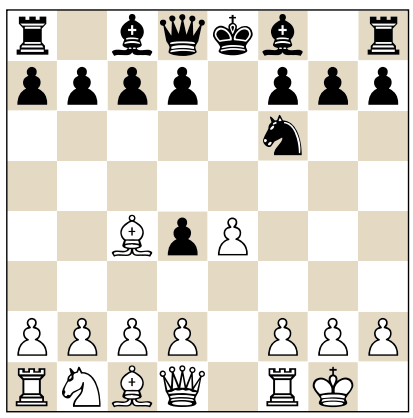


Carlsen-Solak
Tromsø 2014 (9)
position after 9...♕e7

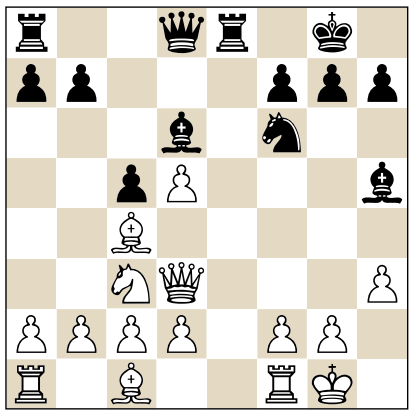
Magnus played 10.g4 here, which is very unlike him. He was lucky to win that game anyway, but in his last game he went too far against Ivan Saric from Croatia.

RL 5.3 – C61
Ivan Saric
Magnus Carlsen
Tromsø 2014 (10)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘d4 4.♘xd4 exd4 5.♗c4 ♘f6 6.0-0



6...d5 This looked like over-the-board inspiration. What else, as the computer surely condemns the move. **7.exd5 ♗e7** 7...♘xd5 8.♕h5 c6 9.♕e5+ ♗e6 10.♕xd4 is just a healthy pawn up for White. **8.♕f3 ♗g4 9.♕f4 0-0 10.h3 ♗d6 11.♕xd4** Now it's become two pawns. **11...c5 12.♕d3 ♗h5 13.♘c3 ♖e8**



Magnus said on TV after the game that he actually was quite optimistic here, but he had completely underestimated White's next move. **14.f4! a6 15.a4 ♕d7** Magnus had no ideas in his head, he said, but perhaps it's already too late. There isn't enough compensation for two pawns, even for a World Champion, and Saric brought the full point home safely.

Norway came 29th in the final standings, which was nothing special. Still, as everyone who has played the Olympiad knows, the end result is very dependent on the last rounds. We lost ½-3½ against Croatia in Round 10. If we had won that match we could have been fighting for the top 10.

However, what really mattered, as I see it, was the ultimate effect of all this, and that was simply fantastic! Chess has become a huge TV-sport in Norway. Thirty per cent of the people watching TV were watching chess. It was another tremendous success. Chess as a TV sport has come to stay. And why not export the success? The people of NRK were actually talking about just that. Even the games of the Norwegian women were followed with almost as much interest as Magnus's. Magnus has surely set the ball rolling, but it can work with weaker players as well. Chess as a product is so good that it may even work with lesser stars than the World Champion. ■

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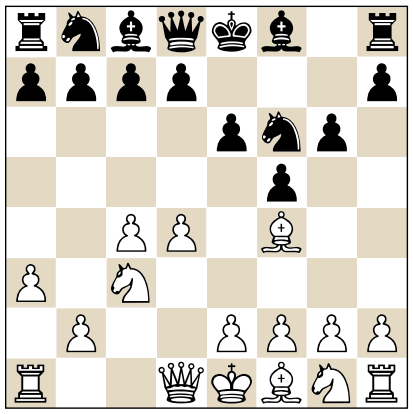
Medal winners and brilliancies

a selection of Olympiad highlights

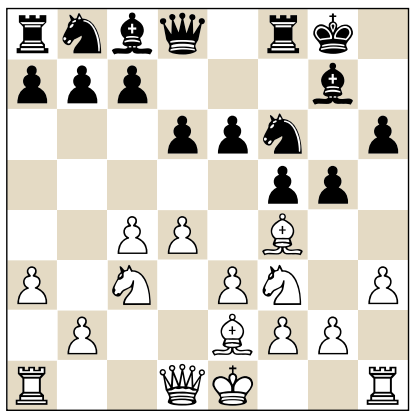
NOTES BY
Jan Timman

HD 5.3 – A85
Veselin Topalov
Paco Vallejo
Tromsø 2014 (3)

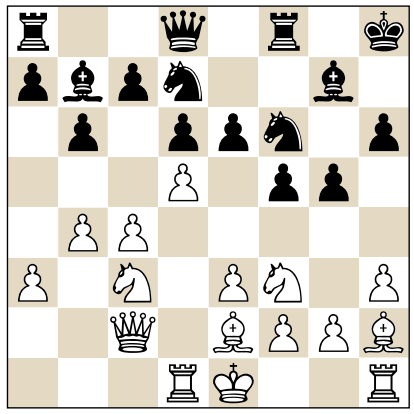
1.d4 f5 2.c4 ♘f6 3.♘c3 e6 4.a3
An unusual system, probably with the intention of meeting 4...♗e7 with 5.d5, with pressure. But Vallejo has other plans.
4...g6 He turns it into a Leningrad.
5.♗f4



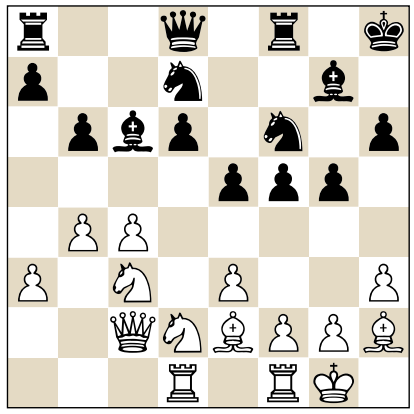
And Topalov goes for Aronian's pet system against the Leningrad. Two extra moves have been played: White's a2-a3 and Black's ...e7-e6. Both have their uses: White wants to start a queenside offensive at some point, while Black's move has vacated square e7 for the queen.
5...♗g7 6.e3 0-0 7.♘f3 d6 8.♗e2 h6 9.h3
An important little move; square h2 is vacated for the bishop.
9...g5



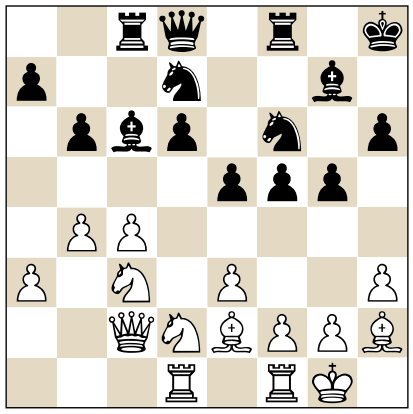
This kingside expansion is regularly seen in both the Stonewall and the Leningrad, but here it is dubious, since there is no follow-up; Black simply hasn't developed enough yet to launch a kingside offensive. Besides, the white bishop would be withdrawn to h2 anyway.
10.♗h2 ♘bd7 Black wants to fianchetto his queen's bishop, but this seriously weakens his kingside, as Topalov will accurately demonstrate. Better was 10...♕e7, to develop the knight to c6 and the bishop to d7.
11.♕c2 b6 12.♖d1
Topalov does not castle yet. He wants to advance his d-pawn when the black bishop is on b7.
12...♔h8 13.b4 ♗b7 14.d5
The correct time for the advance: the black f-pawn is weakened. The first threat is 15.♘d4, forcing Black to push his e-pawn.



14...e5 15.♘d2
Strongly played. Before castling, White first manoeuvres his king's knight into a better position.
15...c6 16.dxc6 ♗xc6 17.0-0
Only now.



17...♖c8 In a higher sense Black is already lost now. The passive 17...♘e8 doesn't look good either, but Black would have done better to indirectly cover the f-pawn with 17...♕e7. After 18.♕xf5 ♘e4 19.♕xf8+ ♗xf8 20.♘dxe4 ♕e6 the difference with the game becomes apparent: White cannot capture the d-pawn at once.

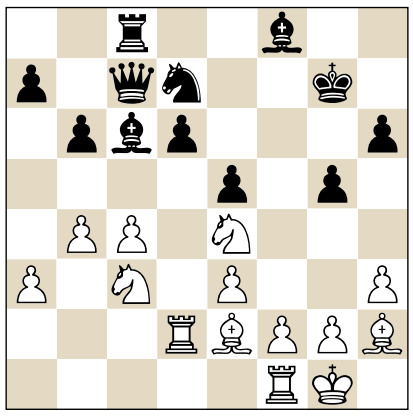


18.♕xf5! You can't really call this a sacrifice. White gets rook, knight and pawn for the queen, while the black d-pawn is also doomed. In addition, Black will be unable to generate any counterplay.

18...♘e4 19.♕xf8+ ♗xf8 20.♘dxe4 ♕c7 21.♖d2 ♔g7

MARIA EMELIANOVA

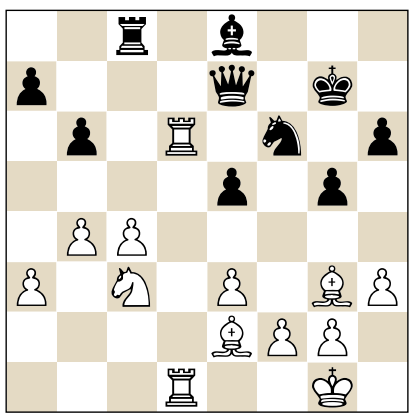
No reason to scratch his head. Veselin Topalov was in excellent form and won the gold medal on Board 1 with a 6½ out of 9 score and a 2872 performance.



22.♖fd1 ♘f6 23.♘xd6 ♗xd6 24.♖xd6 ♕e7 25.♗g3

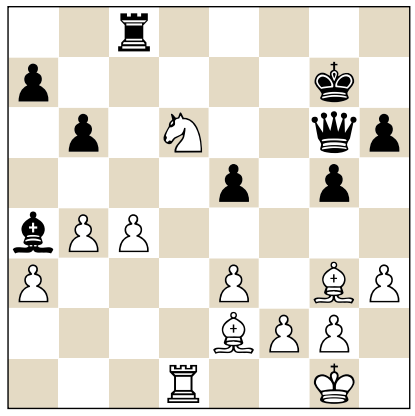
Such little moves confirm the superiority of the white position. Square h2 is vacated for the king.

25...♗e8



26.♖xf6! Elegant play. White sacrifices an exchange to help him break through the black defences.

26...♕xf6 27.♘e4 ♕g6 28.♘d6 ♗a4

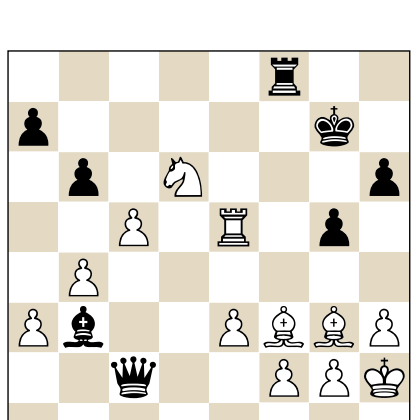


29.♖d5 White does not have to capture the e-pawn yet. He can also take it with the rook.

29...♕b1+ 30.♔h2 ♖f8 31.c5

Very systematic play. The c-pawn will decide the issue.

31...♗b3 32.♖xe5 ♕c2 33.♗f3



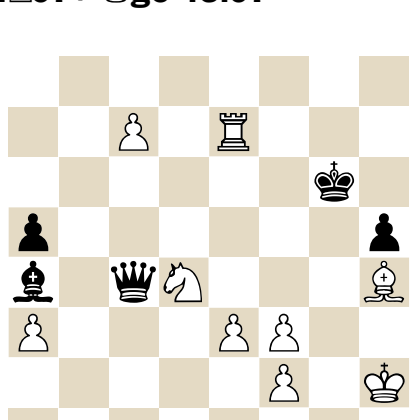
Now White has a pair of very strong 'Horwitz bishops'.

33...♖xf3

This counter-sacrifice brings no relief, but Black had run out of alternatives.

34.gxf3 bxc5 35.bxc5 ♗a4 36.♘f5+ ♔g6

37.c6 h5 38.♘d4 ♕c4 39.h4 gxh4 40.♗xh4 a5 41.♖e6+ ♔f7 42.♖e7+ ♔g6 43.c7



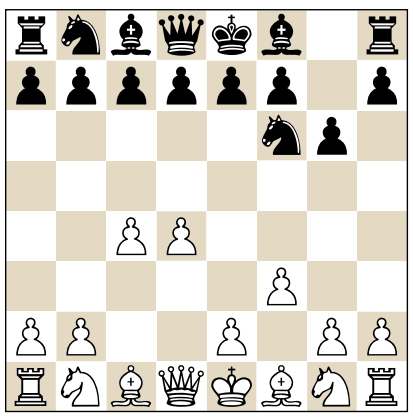
Black resigned.

If Topalov continues to play like this, he will be able to rejoin the contest for the world title.

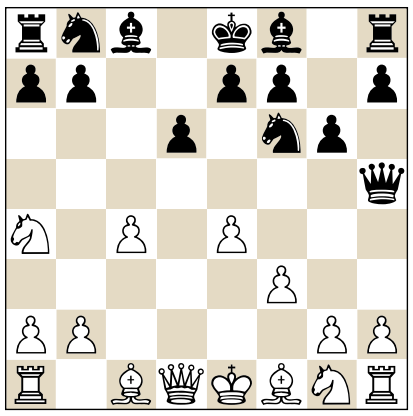
NOTES BY
Anish Giri

GI 1.1 – D70
Anish Giri
Boris Gelfand
Tromsø 2014 (4)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3
Lately I seem to have been specializing in my NIC annotations. This is the second game in the same variation for the same issue (see his game against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave in our Biel report – ed.).

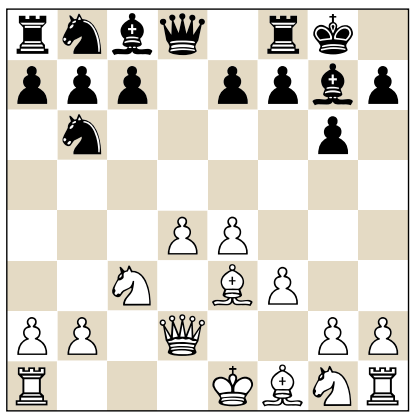


3...d5 Maxime played 3...e6 against me, but for this game I didn't expect any gifts from Boris. I had also played 3.f3 a day earlier against GM Matamoros from Ecuador, so with Boris I expected a sharp theoretical battle.
3...c5 was what Matamoros replied when I first played 4.d5 through sheer inertia and, without letting my hand go, realized that my plan had been to take that pawn. So I moved the pawn back and played 4.dxc5 after all. The game went 4.dxc5 ♕a5+ 5.♘c3 ♕xc5 6.e4 d6 7.♘a4 ♕h5!?

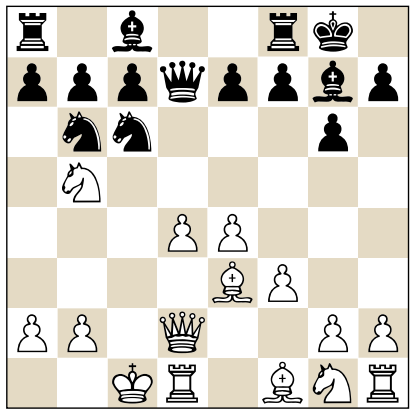


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

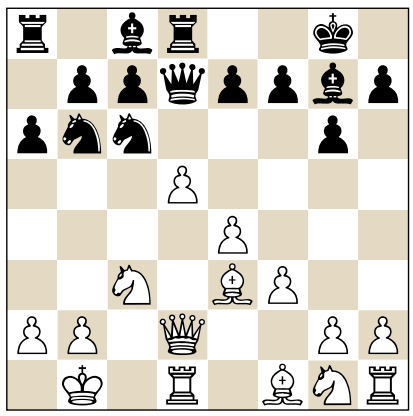
and although I didn't achieve very much in the opening, I eventually managed to win that game as well.
4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3 ♗g7 7.♗e3 0-0 8.♕d2



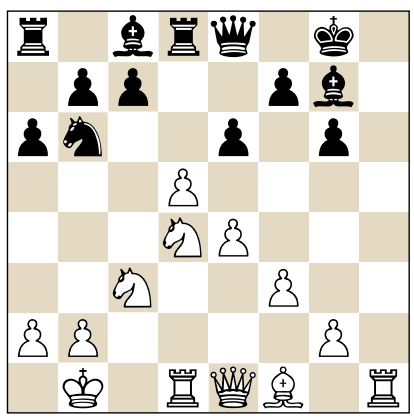
8...♘c6 Boris played 8...e5 in his match against Anand, but since then the theory of this variation has made quite a big leap forward.
9.0-0-0 ♕d6 The trendy line, which I played twice as Black (draw with Vitiugov and Karjakin) and which I studied in great detail with all possible friends and enemies of mine.
10.♘b5 ♕d7



11.♔b1 Just one of the branches. 11.♗h6 or 11.f4 are also the subject of major theoretical debates.
11...♖d8 12.d5 a6 13.♘c3

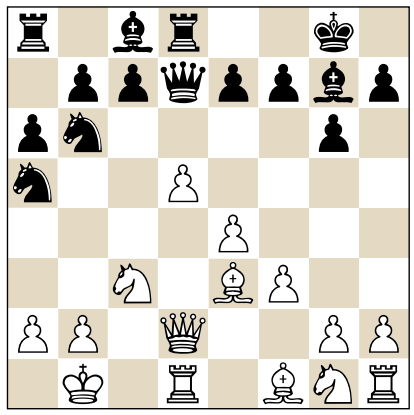


13...♘a5!?
I had mostly expected the pet move of Caruana's, viz. 13...♕e8. However, during a recent training session I (re)discovered that the game move, as well as the other knight jump, 13...♘e5!?, are also options to be reckoned with.
13...♕e8 was played three times by Caruana, without much in the way of results, although he did hold his own in his game against Gelfand himself, which went 14.♕e1 ♘a7!? 15.h4 ♘b5 16.♘ge2 ♘c4 17.♗d4 ♘xd4 18.♘xd4 ♘b6 19.h5 e6 20.hxg6 hxg6



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

21.f4! (an idea that was in the air in our game as well) 21...♕e7 22.♘f3 exd5 23.e5 d4!? and Fabiano was able to create counterplay before the attack had even started.

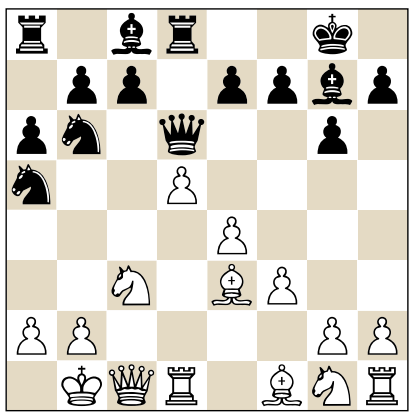


14.♕c1
A sophisticated novelty from Maxim Rodshtein, who introduced it against Emil Sutovsky... Both players sat opposite our team, side by side with Boris, so I was a bit worried about potentially facing the analytical superpower of Israel. Fortunately, I wasn't all on my own either.

14.♗d4 first is more natural, but the text is aimed at preventing the option of 14...e5!?.

14...♕d6

Here the queen has more of a future than in the 'Caruana' variation with 13...♕e8, but it is more exposed as well.

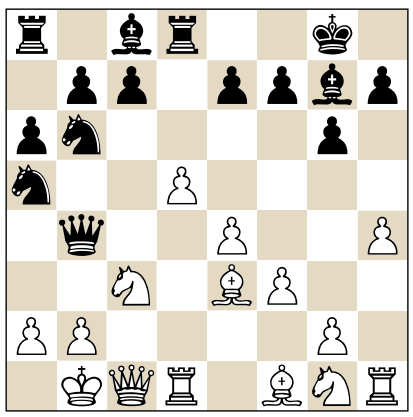


15.h4!?

15.♘ge2 ♘bc4 16.♗d4 ♗f8!? was played in the afore-mentioned game Rodshtein-Sutovsky.

15...♕b4!?

This move surprised me, and although I did know that it was possible, all the transpositions overwhelmed me in the end and I had forgotten that I had looked at it before.

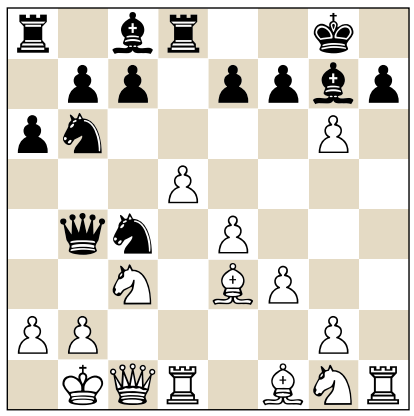


16.h5!

The other option was to play for simplifications with 16.a3 ♕b3 17.♕c2 ♕xc2+ 18.♔xc2 ♘ac4, when Black is very comfortable, going for the ...e6 break on the next move, or perhaps even ...f5. This option being too repulsive, I decided to go with the flow.

16...♘ac4 17.hxg6

I had to make sure that I was not blundering a piece before making this automatic capture.



17...hxg6 17...♗xc3 looks winning at first, but things are not that simple: 18.♗xb6! (not yet deciding which pawn to take with check. 18.gxh7+ is less precise: after 18...♔h8 19.♗xb6 ♗xb2 20.♕xc4 ♕xb6 21.♕b3 ♕xb3 22.axb3 ♗e5 the position looked far from clear to me) 18...♗xb2 (18...♘xb2 19.gxh7+! ♔g7 20.♕xc3+! ♕xc3 21.♗d4+, and now Black can try to be clever, but even after 21...f6! 22.♗xc3 ♘xd1 23.♗d2! he will end up in trouble, as the knight on d1 is doomed) 19.♕xc4 ♕xb6 20.♕b3 ♕xb3 21.axb3 ♗e5, and now it seems wiser to take the f-pawn, 22.gxf7+! when White should be clearly better, thanks to his pawn majority on the kingside.

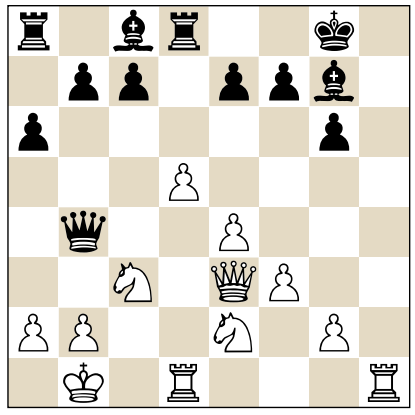
18.♗xc4

Normally I wouldn't be happy giving up both my bishops, but I was lagging so far behind in development that I simply had no other choice.

18.♗h6? was my first thought, but it is met strongly by the well-known motif 18...♘xb2!.

> 'Perhaps I should focus more on the board and stop playing mind games with my opponents during the game.'

18...♘xc4 19.♘ge2 ♘xe3 20.♕xe3



20...♕b6!

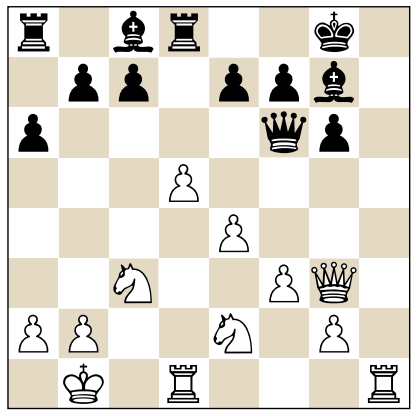
20...e6?! 21.e5! creates some attacking prospects, as f4 will follow.

21.♕g5

21.♕xb6 cxb6 is enough for equality, and for a second I even considered bailing out with 22.d6!?, which is also enough for equality, but in the end I decided to play with some dignity – always a risky decision ☺.

21...♕f6 22.♕g3!

Once again, the queen has to be preserved.

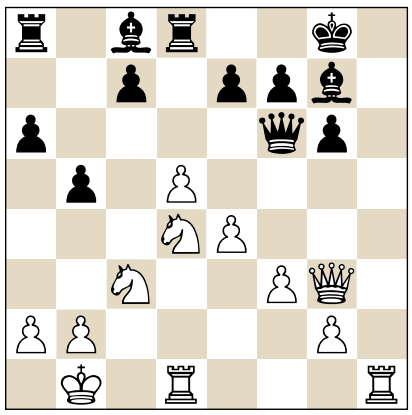


22...b5! A strong reply. I was somewhat perplexed by my opponent's speed. He played too fast to be out of book, yet too slow to be bluffing. Perhaps I should focus more on the board and stop playing mind games with my opponents during the game.

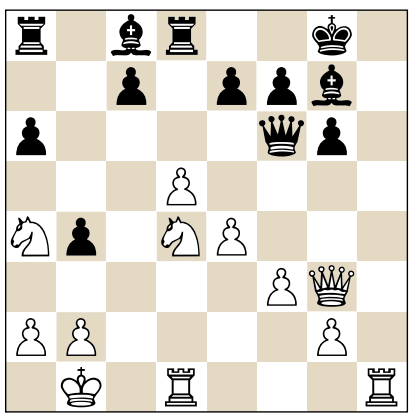
22...e6 is strongly met by the idea of Gelfand himself: 23.f4! exd5 24.e5, when the machine thinks it can hold, but in a practical game it won't be so easy.

22...c6 doesn't work at all, due to 23.dxc6! ♖xd1+? 24.♖xd1 bxc6 25.♖d8+ ♗f8 26.♕c7, winning a full piece.

23.♘d4! Fighting for the initiative. 23.♕xc7 is so far outside the spirit of the position that I didn't even notice it as a possibility. At least that's my excuse for not noticing that a pawn was hanging: 23...♗d7 24.♘d4 b4 25.♘ce2 e6, creating some dangerous counterplay along the potentially open files and diagonals.



23...b4! Also acting fast. **24.♘a4!?** Intuitively I preferred the alternative, 24.♘ce2, and I wanted to play it straightaway, but after thinking for a couple of minutes I just didn't see how my opponent was planning to meet the potential threat of f4, followed by e5. Also, the b2-square is protected now – better safe than sorry.



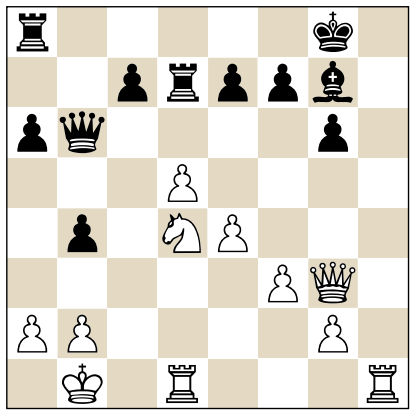
24...♗d7? Boris spent a long time thinking, but curiously enough we both missed the only correct reply, which was 24...♕d6!. I had seen this move, but discarded it because it loses a pawn. However, it soon transpires that there is compensation: 25.♕xd6 exd6 26.♘c6 ♖e8 27.♘xb4 f5! with enough counterplay for the pawn. The bishops and the rooks will unleash their potential fully.

25.♘c5 ♕b6 26.♘xd7 ♖xd7

MARIA EMELIANOVA

Anish Giri played all games and won the bronze medal on Board 1 with a score of 8 out of 11 and a 2836 performance. The Dutchman's win against Boris Gelfand was one of his finest efforts.

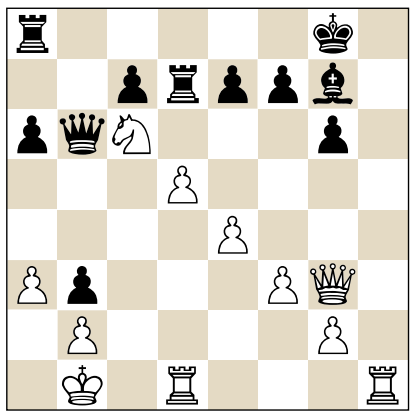
Here it became evident that White is doing well. The knight has a good outpost on c6 and the beautiful bishop on g7 hits into empty air.



27.♘c6

27.♕h3 was my first intention, but after 27...♖d6! 28.♘c6 b3! 29.a3 e6 I wasn't sure what was happening.

27...b3 28.a3

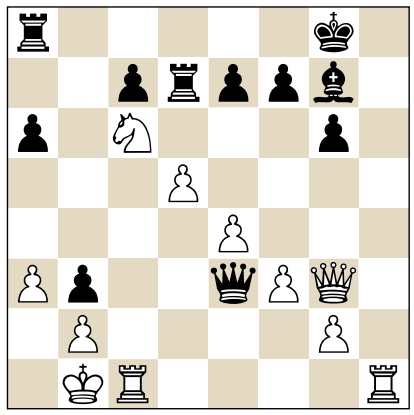


28...♕c5?! This move confused me and stole quite a chunk of my time. 28...e6 is more natural, and even though White maintains the pressure with 29.♘e5! ♖e7 30.f4!, which I was very happy about, it was still a better option than the game move.

29.♖c1

The computer points out 29.♘e5! but this is way too cool for me.

29...♕e3



30.♕e1! Simple and strong. Now I suddenly realized that I was doing very, very well.

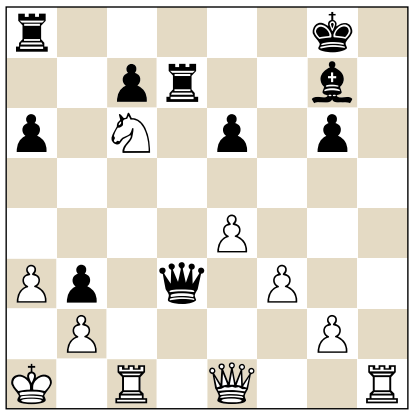
30.♘e5 is nicely met by 30...♕d4!.

30...♕d3+

30...♕xe1 31.♖hxe1 is a sad endgame.

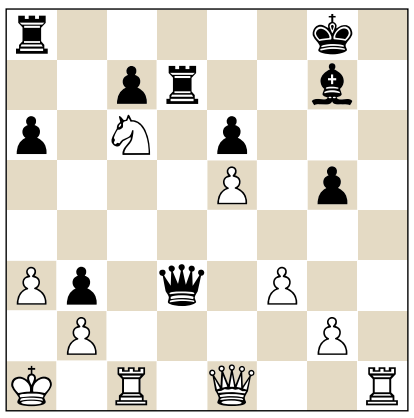
31.♔a1 e6 31...♖e8 is just too slow: 32.f4! e6 33.♘e5!.

32.dxe6! fxe6



33.e5! Here I was ecstatic; the knight dominates the a8-rook and the g7-bishop. White is in complete control. Black's only hope is connected with the king on a1, trapped in a cage and hence in potential back rank issues.

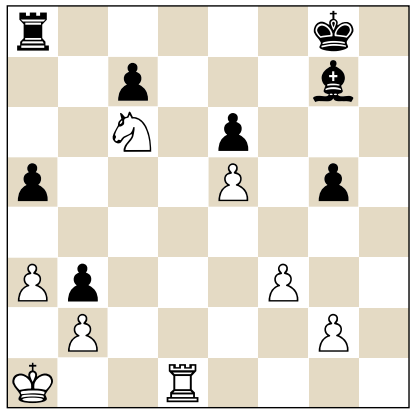
33...g5?! 33...♔f7! was a better move, when after 34.f4 ♖h8 Black would still be in the game, although his position is very bad indeed.



34.♖d1?

Somewhat minimalistic. I considered the endgame to be practically winning and the alternative seemed a little murky in potential time-trouble. 34.♖c3! was the other move I considered, when after 34...♕d5 I saw the beautiful idea of ♕b1, but failing to see a forced win, I decided that it was time to cash in in the endgame: 35.♕b1 ♗xe5, and in fact both the simple 36.♘xe5 and the sophisticated 36.♖cc1! should lead to the desired goal.

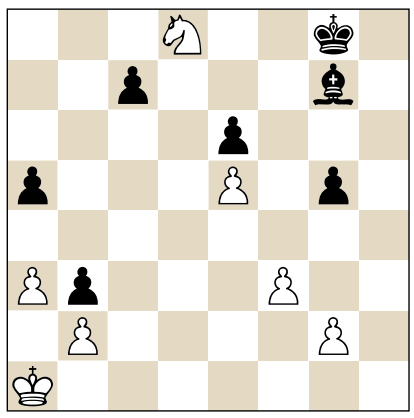
34...♕xd1+ 35.♕xd1 ♖xd1+ 36.♖xd1 a5



37.♖d8+? 37.a4! was possible, too, although I didn't consider it for too long: 37...♖a6 38.♖c1 ♔f7, and now White will slowly crawl out, securing a serious advantage in the endgame: 39.♖c3 ♔g6 40.♔b1!.

37...♖xd8 38.♘xd8

I assumed I would just pick up all the pawns, but it turned out that life wasn't all that simple.



38...a4!! The first unpleasant surprise. I thought I had the option of 39.♘c6 after 38...♗xe5, which is hopeless for Black, as both his queenside pawns fall.

39.♘xe6 ♗xe5

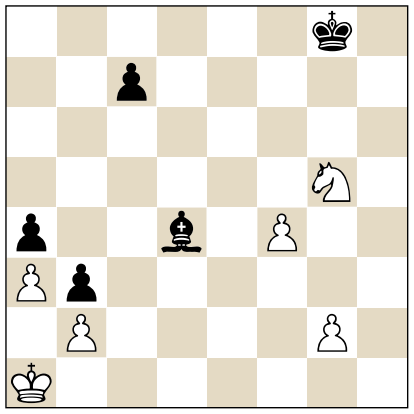
Here I already understood that I wouldn't be able to win the a4-pawn after I had picked up the pawn on g5 and that my king would be stuck in the corner, but I still felt my winning chances should be quite serious.

40.♘xg5

I didn't think that this was a sure win, but the other knight move seemed to be promising even less.

40.♘c5 picks up the a-pawn, but Black is in time to activate his king: 40...♗d4 41.♘xa4 ♔f7 42.♘c3. Unlike in the game, the knight can't be captured now: 42...♔e6 43.a4 ♔d7, and this is very drawish indeed.

40...♗d4 41.f4



My plan was to push my pawns to f5 and g4 with the knight on e4, then to push g5-g6, and eventually to transfer my knight to e6. However, in reality this is only possible if Black plays along.

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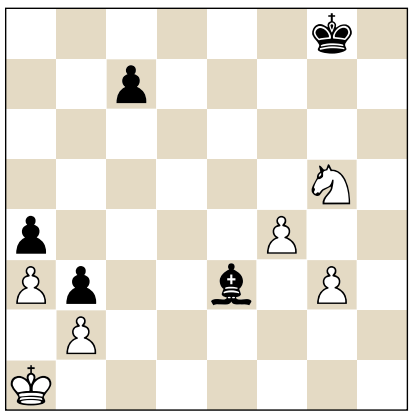
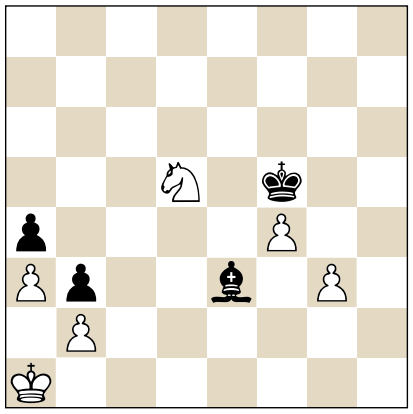
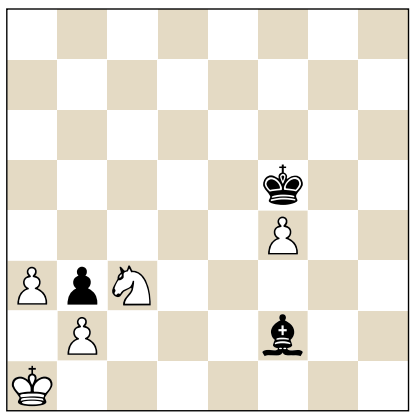
41...♗e3 42.g3
The problem for White is that there is no way to attack the a4-pawn. ♘e4-c3, which seems inevitable, won't yield White anything, as ♘e4 will be met by ...♗d4 and ♘c3 by ...♗xc3!, with a drawn pawn ending.



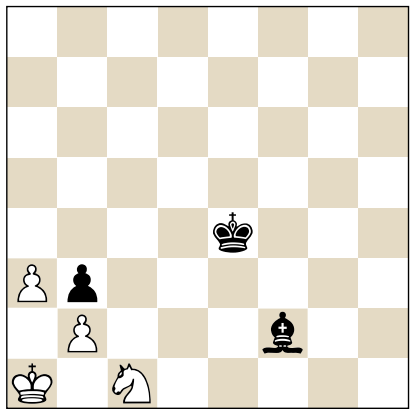
42...♔g7?
The losing move by a mere tempo! My opponent had calculated one move further than me, but still fell one move short of the truth.
Best was 42...c6! ♔g7 44.♘e4 ♔g6 45.♘c3 ♔f5 46.♘xa4 ♗f2 47.♔c1 ♗xg3 48.♔d2 ♗xf4+ 49.♔c3, and White finally picks up the nasty pawn, but the endgame should be a draw – after some proper suffering, of course.
43.♘e6+ ♔f6 44.♘xc7 ♔f5 45.♘d5
All forced, ladies and gentlemen.



45...♗f2
Initially I thought that Boris had missed the fact that without the black c-pawn there is the move ♘c3: 45...♗d4 46.♘c3! ♗xc3 47.bxc3, and it's the so-called trousers.
46.♘c3 ♗xg3 47.♘xa4 ♗f2
Preventing ♘c5.
48.♘c3



48...♔xf4 Tantamount to resigning, but Boris's original idea just didn't work. Initially I believed that after 48...♗e3 the pawn ending would be drawn. Fortunately, before my cold sweat became visible, I realized that the position was winning: 49.a4!! (49.♘e2?? ♔e4 50.♔b1 ♗xf4! 51.♘xf4 ♔xf4 52.♔c1 ♔e3 53.♔d1 ♔d3, and draw) 49...♗xf4 50.a5 ♗e3 51.a6 ♔e6 52.♘b5 ♔d7 53.a7.
49.♘e2+ ♔e4 50.♘c1
And I pick up the second pawn and the game is over. The rest is elementary technique, but in order to stay respectful towards my opponent, I tried to take a bit of time and convert it in the most precise possible way.

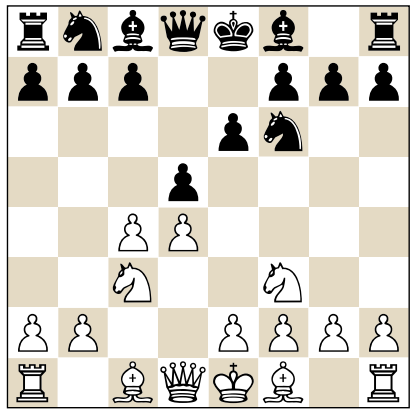


50...♔d4 51.♘xb3+ ♔c4 52.♘c1 ♗c5 53.♔b1 ♔b5 54.♘e2 ♗e7 55.♘c3+ ♔c4 56.♔c2 ♗f8 57.♘b1 ♗e7 58.♘d2+ ♔b5 59.♔b3 ♗f8 60.♘e4 ♗g7 61.♘c3+ ♔c5 62.♔c2 ♔c4 63.b3+ ♔d4 64.b4 ♔c4 65.♘d1 ♗f6 66.♘b2+ ♔d5 67.♔b3 ♗d4 68.a4 ♔c6 69.♘d1 ♗g1 70.♔c4 ♔b6 71.♘c3 ♗f2 72.♘e4 ♗h4 73.♘c5 ♗g5 74.♘e6 ♗h4 75.a5+ ♔a6 76.♘c5+ ♔a7 77.b5 ♗d8 78.♔b4 ♗c7 79.♔a4 ♗d8 80.♘e6 Black resigned.

NOTES BY
Rustam Kasimdzhanov

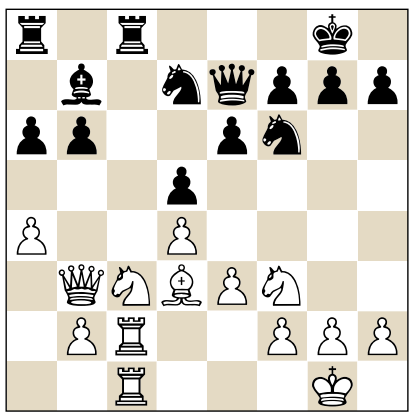
QO 16.14 – D37
Rustam Kasimdzhanov
Vladimir Kramnik
Tromsø 2014 (6)

Needless to say, a match against Russia is always a pretty special occasion. I felt that Russia might want to rest Kramnik when playing Uzbekistan, but I was wrong. I rehearsed some lines in the QGD (what else?) and went to the playing hall, none too optimistic.
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 d5 4.♘c3
So far so good. I had mainly expected 4...♗e7, but also spent some time thinking of what I would do after 4...c5. My opponent's move took me quite by surprise.



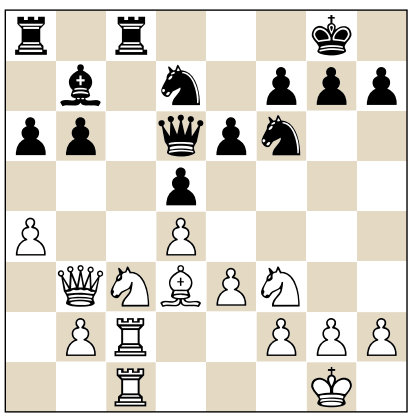
4...♘bd7
Hmm, what's that? Normally it's an invitation to the Ragozin, which might arise after 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♗g5 ♗b4. This felt too messy, so I decided to play another line, which luckily I had looked at recently.
5.♗f4 dxc4 6.e3 ♗d6
Kramnik, as usual, has his own ideas about what the right move order is. The more usual continuation is 6...a6 7.a4 ♗d6.
7.♗xd6 cxd6 8.♗xc4 a6 9.a4
Now we're back in Gelfand-Carlsen from 2013. After 9.d5 e5 10.a4 ♘c5 11.♘d2 ♗f5 Black is in time to prevent e4 and is doing fine.
9...d5 10.♗d3 b6 11.0-0 0-0 12.♕b3 ♕e7 13.♖ac1 ♗b7

14.♖c2 ♖fc8 15.♖fc1
I took quite a bit of time in the opening, despite knowing the line pretty well. By now I was expecting a long-drawn, quiet battle. My heart started beating twice as fast when Kramnik played:

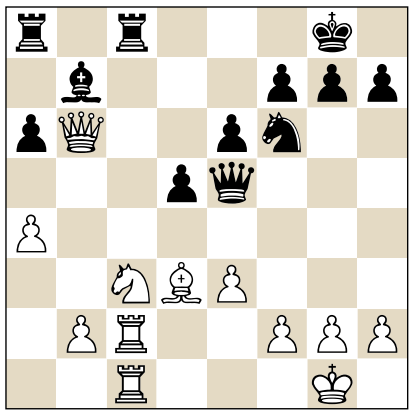


15...♕d6?!
Because I knew this move to be bad!! Carlsen had played it against Gelfand, and my engine was of the opinion that any other normal move, or in fact just passing the move to one's opponent (well, I know it's not legal in chess, but I'd like to stress the point nonetheless ☺) would have been better.
16.♘e5!
A novelty, and a move missed by Carlsen, Gelfand and Kramnik! Now Black is firmly on the defensive.
16.♘a2 ♖xc2 17.♖xc2 ♖c8 18.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 19.♕c3 ♗b7 20.b4, with a draw after 55 moves, was Gelfand-Carlsen, Moscow 2013.

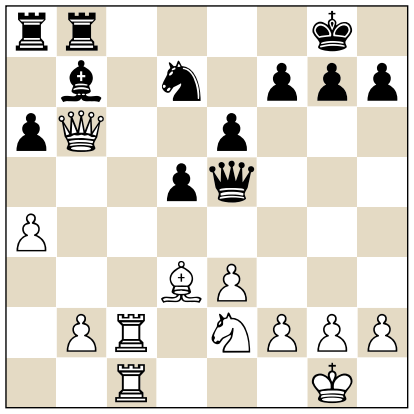
'A novelty, and a move missed by Carlsen, Gelfand and Kramnik!'



16...♘xe5!?
Objectively not a good move, but practically not a bad choice, I guess. The more prudent 16...♖ab8 17.f4 leaves Black solid but extremely passive.
17.dxe5 ♕xe5 18.♕xb6
By now I was really excited. White is more active and most endgames are going to be horrible for Black. What do you know – it didn't take me very long to spoil this position.



18...♖cb8
Interesting was 18...♖ab8!? 19.♘e4! ♖xc2 20.♘xf6+ gxf6 21.♖xc2 d4 22.♕xd4 ♕xd4 23.exd4 ♖d8 24.♖d2, leading to a position which should be quite tough to win – although still quite sad for Black, of course.
19.♘e2 19.f4? ♘d7! is one of the ways to go wrong.
19...♘d7
19...d4 20.♕xd4 ♕g5 21.♘g3 ♖d8 22.♕b4 doesn't quite work for Black.



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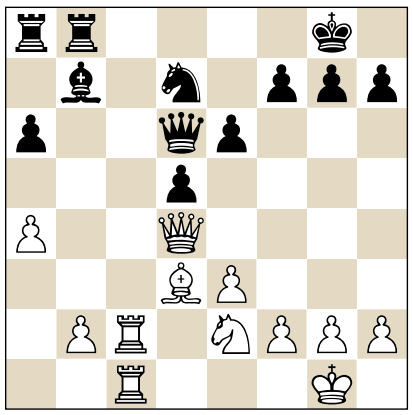
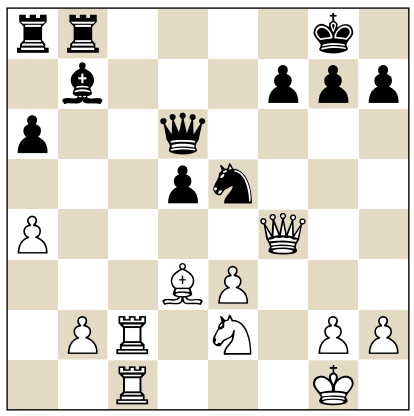
20.♕d4?! I played this because I saw nothing better; the best move just did not occur to me.
After 20.♕a5, 20...d4! is good for Black. But 20.♕b4! would have been unbelievably strong. I'll not even give any lines – just close your eyes and try to imagine the white queen on e7. Yeah, that will hurt.
20...♕d6!
Somehow I managed to miss this move. Most of my edge is gone now.
I was hoping to get something like 20...♕xd4 21.♘xd4 e5 22.♘f5 ♘f6 23.♘d6 ♘e8 24.♘xe8 ♖xe8 25.♖c7 ♖ec8 26.b4, but clearly this involved some wishful thinking ☺.



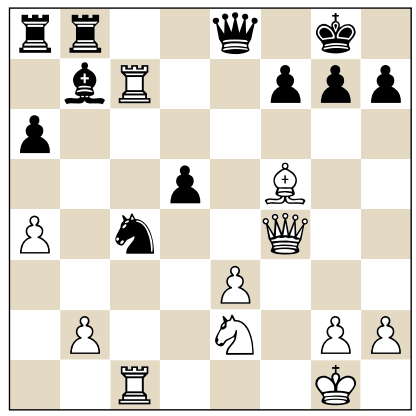
21.f4
Played with a heavy heart – now there will be weaknesses in my camp, too.
My instincts were begging for 21.♘g3, but the conscious part of my brain refused to understand it. I thought I would lose control after something like 21...e5 22.♕g4 g6 23.♘f5 ♕e6, but now a stroke of magic leaves White on top: 24.♖c7 ♖c8 25.♕b4!. I guess I can forgive myself for not seeing this one.
21...e5
Naturally. 21...♖c8 22.♖xc8+ ♖xc8 23.♖xc8+ ♗xc8 24.b4 e5 25.fxe5 ♘xe5 26.b5 would have left White slightly better still.
22.fxe5 ♘xe5 23.♕f4
This wasn't my intention at all, but I suddenly noticed the move was possible, and before I knew it I ended up playing it. Must have been my lucky day ☺.
23.♘f4 was my original idea: 23...♖e8 24.♗e2, posing some problems still.

NEW IN CHESS

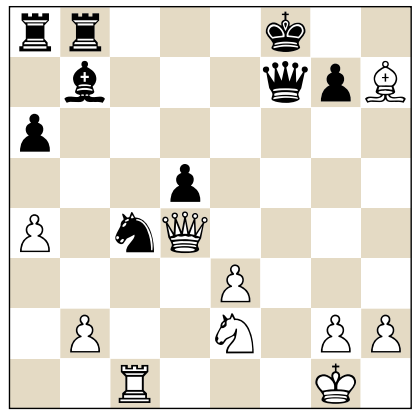
Rustam Kasimdzhanov won a brilliant game against Vladimir Kramnik, Russia's first board. 'Sometimes chess does bring you happy moments. Very happy moments.'



23...♕e7? An amazing moment. This move is just bad – for several reasons, as we will see. The interesting part is that it was the move I was expecting the most – there must be some telepathic connection between players after all!! The correct 23...♖c8 24.♘d4 ♖xc2 25.♖xc2 ♖e8 26.♗e2 feels about equal.
24.♖c7 Of course!
24...♕e8
24...♘xd3 25.♖xe7 ♘xf4 26.♘xf4 is dead lost.
25.♗f5 ♘c4
This was the point of Black's play, and also what I had been calculating for quite a while. Some pawns are hanging, but it turns out that Black simply can't defend his king.

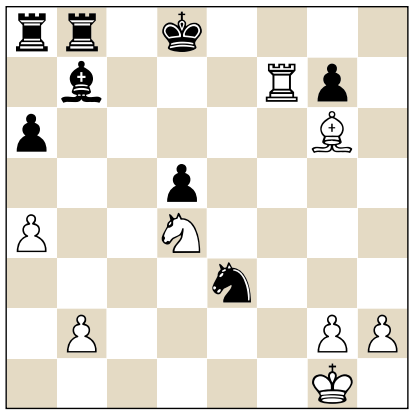


26.♗d7! This is very strong and very clean, and I was rightly proud of it after the game. White did, however, have a win of preternatural beauty: 26.♖xf7!! I was not (yet) looking in this direction! 26...♕xf7 27.♗xh7+ ♔f8 28.♕d4!



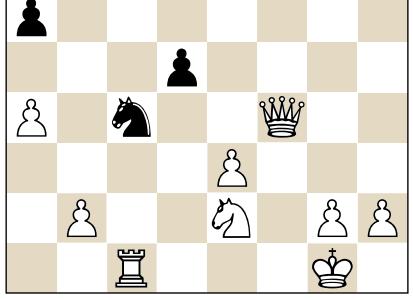
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A difficult move – and the rest is pretty forced: 28...♔e8 29.♖f1 ♕e7 30.♗g6+ ♔d8 31.♖f7!. When my computer showed me this, I didn't believe my eyes for a second! 31...♕xe3+ 32.♕xe3 ♘xe3 33.♘d4!!



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and Black actually gets MATED. That is an immortal combination – to put it mildly ☺.



'When my computer showed me this, I didn't believe my eyes for a second!'

26...♕f8

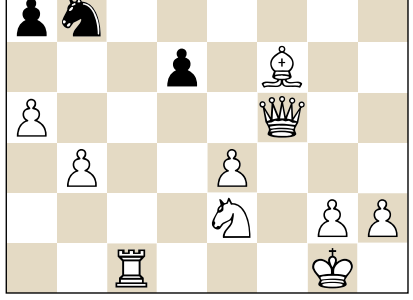
A resignation of sorts. After 26...♕xe3+ 27.♕xe3 ♘xe3 28.♘d4! it took me a while to see that White is just winning here: (28.b3? d4!) 28...♘c4 (28...a5 29.b3! dominates the black knight) 29.♘c6!, picking up material.

27.b3 A bit lazy, but it really spoils very little. 27.♘d4 ♘xb2 28.♖f1 is just game over.

27...♘b6

After 27...♘d6, 28.♘d4 wins.

28.♗f5



28...d4

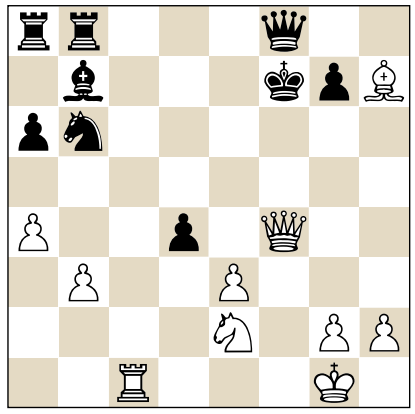
I actually felt he'd go for this, and already knew what my answer would be. There was nothing better: 28...g6 29.♗e6! fxe6 30.♕e5 ♖e8 31.♖f1, and wins. Or 28...♗c8 29.♗xh7+ (29.♖xf7 also wins) 29...♔xh7 30.♖xf7 ♕e8 31.♕h4+ ♔g8 32.♖e7, and wins.

29.♖xf7!

A much simpler version here, but still a ridiculously pleasant way to finish the game.

29...♔xf7 29...♕xf7 also loses quickly: 30.♗xh7+ ♔f8 31.♕d6+ ♔e8 32.♗g6.

30.♗xh7+



As 30...♔e7 (or 30...♔e8 31.♗g6+ ♔e7 32.♕e5+) 31.♕e5+ ♔d8 32.♕c7+ ♔e8 33.♗g6+ leads to checkmate, Kramnik resigned. Sometimes chess does bring you happy moments. Very happy moments ☺.

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NOTES BY
Sam Shankland

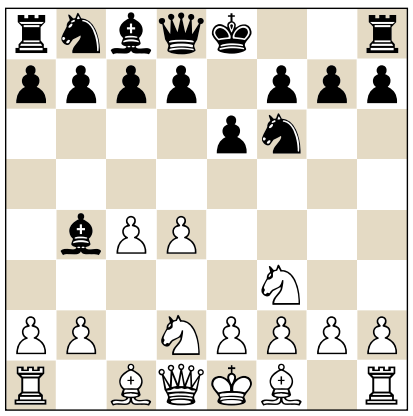
QI 1.12 – E14
Sam Shankland
Judit Polgar
Tromsø 2014 (7)

Going into this game I had already amassed a 6/6 score, and while this had been anything but easy to attain, I had not played any GMs yet. And Judit Polgar is not just any GM... I knew I had a big challenge ahead of me and I was very happy to come through with a big win over a very accomplished player.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 e6 3.♘f3 ♗b4+

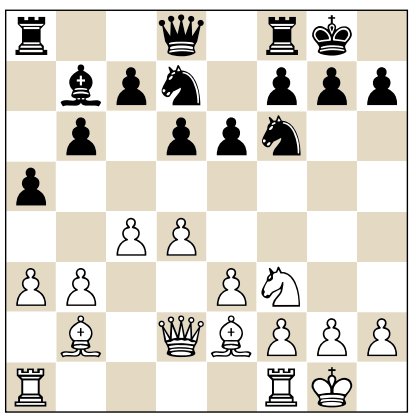
Something of a surprise. Normally Judit plays 3...b6 in this position.

4.♘bd2



4...b6 Black shies away from the sharper continuations after 4...0-0 5.a3 ♗e7 6.e4. While I regard the text as leading to a slightly better position for White, Black is solid and not without counter-chances.

5.a3 ♗xd2+ 6.♕xd2 ♗b7 7.e3 a5 8.b3 d6 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 10.♗b2 0-0 11.0-0



The battle lines have been drawn. With more space and the bishop pair, I think White is to be preferred, but Black is very solid and has excellent light-square control along the long diagonal, whereas the closed nature of the position limits the potential of the white bishops.

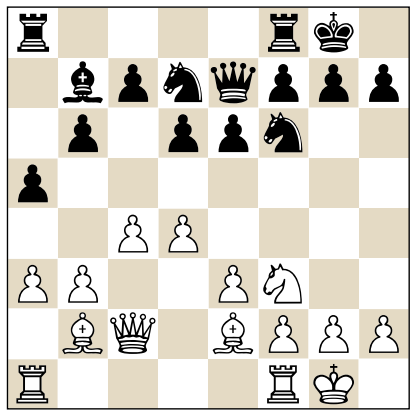
11...♕e7

A solid move. Black could try the much less restrained 11...♘e4, but I don't see this leading to any joy: 12.♕c2 f5. Black's obvious intention is to lift the rook to g6 or h6 and deliver checkmate, but White can open the position favourably for the bishops: 13.d5! e5 (after 13...exd5 14.cxd5 ♗xd5 15.♖ad1 ♗b7 16.♘d4 White has too many threats) 14.♘d2, with a white edge.

12.♕c2

So far everything has been very textbook. 12.♕c2 was an attempted improvement on a game I played in 2011, planning ♘d2 and e4. I had only briefly checked 12...♗e4 in this position and had not considered the very thematic ...c5 advance.

12.b4 was my choice against Christiansen some years back.



12...c5

I had not prepared this move, although it looks quite natural. I thought I should anticipate on the centre being opened (Black can play ...d5 whenever she likes) before going ♘d2.

13.♖fd1

DAVID LLADA

Sam Shankland (in action against Judit Polgar) played the tournament of his life. With a score of 9 out of 10 he won the gold medal on Board 5 by a wide margin.

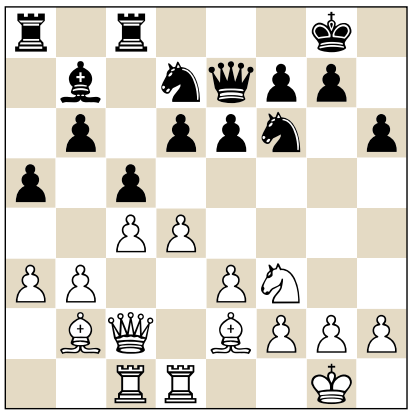
Tromsø (open) 2014

		Pts	Tb1
1	China	19	422.5
2	Hungary	17	372
3	India	17	371.5
4	Russia	17	352
5	Azerbaijan	17	345
6	Ukraine	16	377.5
7	Cuba	16	361
8	Armenia	16	350.5
9	Israel	16	348
10	Spain	16	334.5
11	Belarus	16	304.5
12	Netherlands	15	367.5
13	France	15	357.5
14	USA	15	348
15	Poland	15	335.5
16	Serbia	15	324
17	Uzbekistan	15	320.5
18	Argentina	15	316
19	Peru	15	313
20	Romania	15	310
21	Turkey	15	295.5
22	Brazil	15	291.5
23	Egypt	15	284
24	Croatia	14	343
25	Bulgaria	14	335.5
26	Czech Republic	14	324.5
27	Vietnam	14	324
28	England	14	314
29	Norway	14	309.5
30	Germany	14	304.5
31	Australia	14	275
32	Finland	14	272.5
33	Sweden	14	270.5
34	Kyrgyzstan	14	247.5
35	Latvia	13	297
36	Greece	13	293
37	Slovakia	13	289.5
38	Slovenia	13	288.5
39	Iceland	13	284.5
40	Bosnia & Herzegovina	13	281.5
41	Colombia	13	276
42	Kazakhstan	13	275.5
43	Indonesia	13	274.5
44	Georgia	13	272
45	Qatar	13	268.5
46	Philippines	13	268
47	Venezuela	13	266
48	Iran	13	265
49	Lithuania	13	263.5
50	Mexico	13	263.5
51	Switzerland	13	257
52	Italy	13	254.5
53	Moldova	13	252.5
54	Canada	13	251

177 teams, 11 rounds

13.♘d2 may have been the best move after all, as e4 is coming.

13...h6 14.♖ac1 ♖fc8



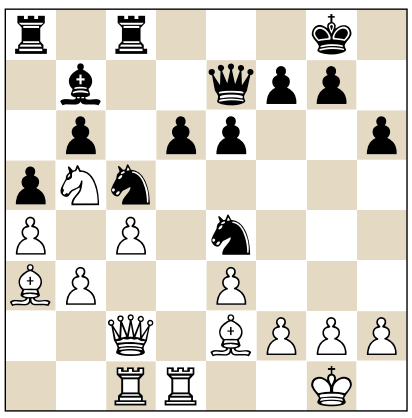
15.a4 My first big decision of the game. Obviously I was not too happy about ceding the c5-square, but Black was clearly about to play ...a4 – why else would she choose the f-rook to go to c8?

I considered 15.d5!? but it looked a bit too adventurous: 15...exd5 16.♘h4 ♕e6 (after 16...♘e4 White has 17.♘f5 ♕g5 18.g4!) 17.♘f5 d4!.

15...cxd4 16.♘xd4 ♘c5 17.♗a3 ♘fe4! 18.♘b5

Trying to stay flexible – in some cases I might want to put the bishop on f3.

I thought Black looked fine after 18.♗f3 f5. The well-centralized knights are no worse than White's bishop pair. Of course, 18.f3?! is out of the question because of 18...♕g5! 19.fxe4? ♗xe4.

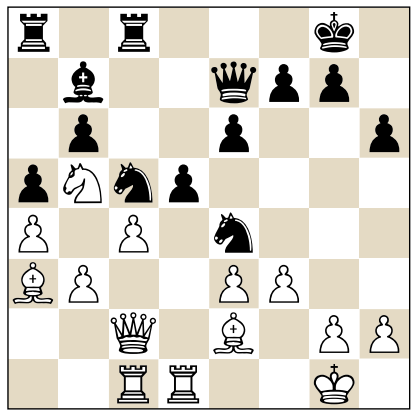


18...d5?! I don't like this move. Black was best advised to not open lines for the white bishops.

After 18...♖d8 I would still choose White if given a choice, but the position is probably close to equal objectively.

'One day I'll be able to tell my grandchildren that I was the last man ever to beat Judit Polgar in a professional game.'

19.f3 Now that ...♕g5 is under control, this is quite strong.

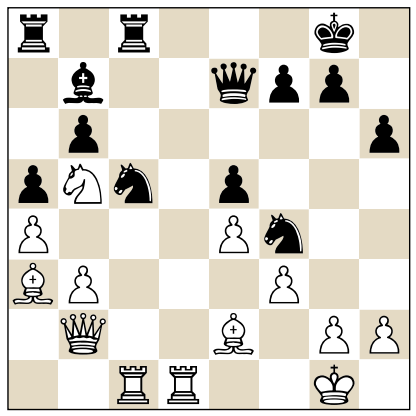


19...♘f6 After 19...♕g5 20.fxe4! there will be no more ...♗xe4, and after 20...♕xe3+, 21.♔h1 ♘xe4 22.♖f1 comes up short for Black.

After 19...♘d6 20.♘xd6 ♕xd6 21.cxd5 White is slightly better (21.♕b2 is the computer's improvement over my intended 21.cxd5).

20.♕b2 e5 21.cxd5 ♘xd5 22.e4 ♘f4

It looks scary to allow the knight to land on e3, but if White does not see any ghosts, he is just winning: 22...♘e3 23.♖d6 ♕g5 24.g3.

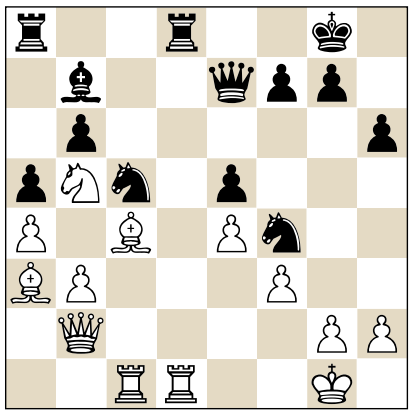


23.♗c4 Here Black is strategically

busted, but her well-posted knight on f4 allows for some potential counterplay against my king. At this point we were already down 1-0 in the match and worse on the other two boards. This created even more pressure than was already on me to convert an objectively good position to a win while being attacked by Judit Polgar...

23...♖d8

The barbaric 23...♖c6 caused me some concern during the game: 24.g3 ♖g6 25.♔h1 (25.♗f1! is the computer's choice) 25...♘h5 26.♕f2. White seems to have everything under control, but accidents are always waiting to happen.



24.♔h1?!

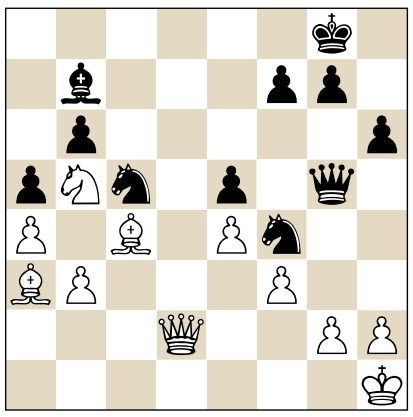
Losing some of the advantage.

During the game I was not sure about the position after 24.g3! ♘h3+ 25.♔g2 ♘g5 26.♗xc5 bxc5 27.♕c3. Black can try something like ...♖d4, recapture with the c-pawn and throw in ...f5 as soon as possible, but the computer just laughs.

24...♖xd1+ 25.♖xd1 ♖d8 26.♕c2

White is still clearly better.

26...♖xd1+ 27.♕xd1 ♕g5 28.♕d2



NEW IN CHESS

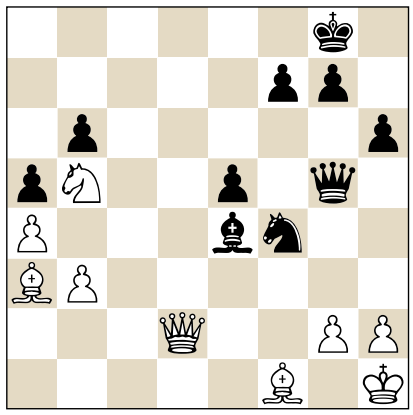
In an interview with *The Times* Judit Polgar announced the end of her professional career. For 25 years the former prodigy was the undisputed Queen of Chess.

28...♘xe4!

The best practical choice. Otherwise Black would get run over with no counterplay after a subsequent ♘d6.

29.fxe4 ♗xe4 30.♗f1

Here White is a clear piece up for two pawns, but things are not that simple. There are no threats against the king, but White's pieces are really tied down to the defence. White has to reorganize his pieces without blundering into any tricks.



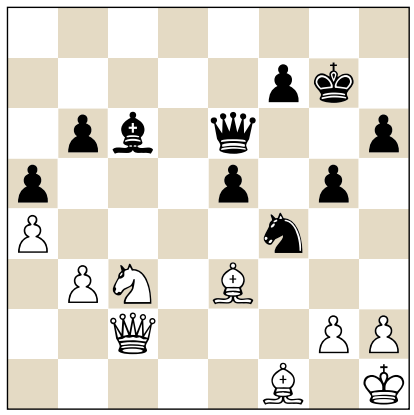
30...♗c6 31.♗c1 ♕g4 32.♘c3 g5

Black could have tried 32...♘h3, aiming to freeze the king and always keep moves like ...♕f5 in the air. It also sets some nice traps. White should play 33.♕d8+ (and not 33.♘d1? ♕xd1! or 33.♘d5? ♗xd5 34.♕xd5 ♘f2+, with a perpetual) 33...♔h7 34.♗e3.

33.♕c2 ♔g7 34.♗e3

Step one complete – the bishop on a3 has been rerouted to e3, controlling some kingside squares and pressuring the b6-pawn.

34...♕e6



35.♔g1!

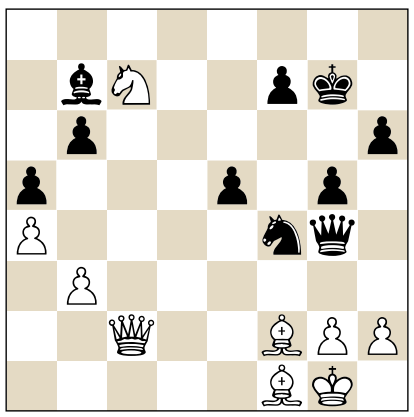
I did not need to be asked twice about this move. As soon as Black cannot meet it with ...♘h3, it should be played.

35.♗xb6? ♗xg2+ only makes White's life more difficult.

35...♗b7 36.♘b5 ♘d5

Here I realized that my intended 37.♘c7 would not be too clever, when after 37...♕c8 White might even be worse. Still, Black's queen and knight retreating from g4 and f4 to e6 and d5 was a welcome sign.

37.♗f2 ♘f4 38.♘c7 ♕g4



Tromsø 2014 rating performances

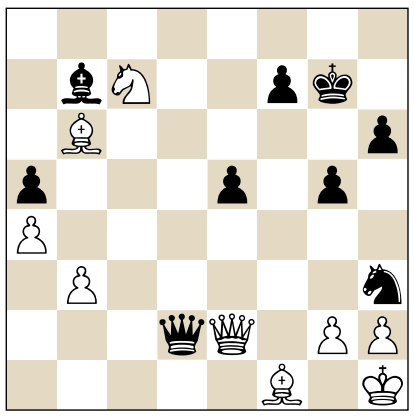
				TPR
1	Yu Yangyi	CHN	2668	2912
2	Veselin Topalov	BUL	2772	2872
3	Nguyen Ngoc Tr. Son	VIE	2634	2843
4	Csaba Balogh	HUN	2637	2839
5	Michael Adams	ENG	2740	2839
6	Anish Giri	NED	2745	2836
7	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	AZE	2743	2833
8	Samuel Shankland	USA	2624	2831
9	Ding Liren	CHN	2742	2831
10	Dmitry Svetushkin	MOL	2547	2809
11	Alexey Shirov	LAT	2709	2800
12	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2877	2799
13	Levon Aronian	ARM	2805	2789
14	Francisco Vallejo	ESP	2698	2784
15	Etienne Bacrot	FRA	2720	2781
16	Fabiano Caruana	ITA	2801	2776
17	Nikola Sedlak	SRB	2554	2773
18	Isan Ortiz	CUB	2603	2766
19	Lazaro Bruzon	CUB	2664	2762
20	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	FRA	2768	2760
21	Vladimir Kramnik	RUS	2760	2758
22	S.P. Sethuraman	IND	2590	2757
23	Krishnan Sasikiran	IND	2669	2753
24	Arkadij Naiditsch	GER	2709	2751
25	Tomi Nybäck	FIN	2591	2746
26	Radoslaw Wojtaszek	POL	2735	2746
27	Erwin l'Ami	NED	2631	2745
28	Pavel Eljanov	UKR	2723	2745
29	Rustam Kasimdzhanov	UZB	2700	2743
30	Valentin Iotov	BUL	2553	2741
31	David Navara	CZE	2716	2738

39.♗xb6

Things are going well. I picked up a pawn and Black still has no meaningful kingside threats.

I wanted to make 39.♘e8+? work, but just couldn't: 39...♔f8 40.♗c5+ bxc5 41.♕xc5+ ♔xe8 42.♗b5+ ♔d8. It was rather frustrating during the game to realize that there is no mate here, and that White is dead lost.

39...♘h3+ 40.♔h1 ♕f4 41.♕c4 ♕d2 42.♕e2



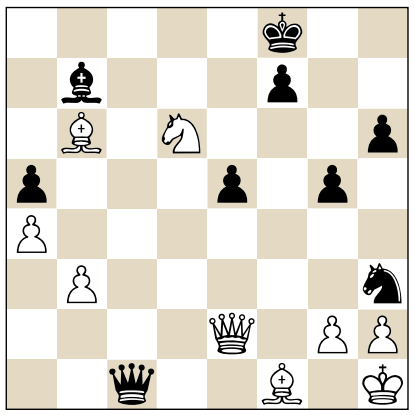
42...♕c1!

She never makes it easy.

43.♘e8+

After 43.♕xe5+ ♔g6 44.♕d6+ ♔h5 45.♕f6 Black has managed to complicate the game, but although I was not too sure here, the computer says White wins.

43...♔f8 44.♘d6



44...♗d5

After 44...♘f4, 45.♗e3 is simple enough: 45...♗xg2+ 46.♕xg2 ♕xe3 47.♕a8+!. A nice resource.

45.♗e3 ♕b1 46.♕d3 ♕e1 47.♕e2 47.♘f5 was a bit easier: 47...♘f2+ 48.♗xf2 ♕xf2 49.♘g3 ♗e6 50.♕d6+! – I had missed this move.

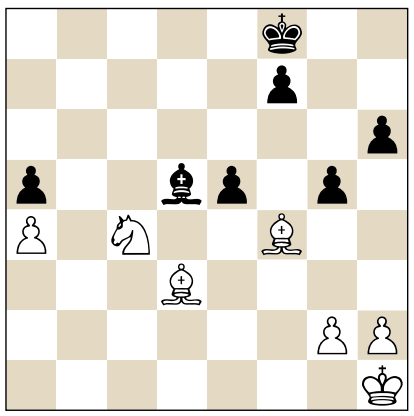
47...♕b1 48.♘c4 ♕xb3 49.♕d3

In case of 49.♗c5+ the engine claims +9 or something like this, though my move does seem to be good enough.

49...♕xd3

After 49...♗xg2+ 50.♔xg2 ♕b7+ White thankfully has 51.♔g3!.

50.♗xd3 ♘f4 51.♗xf4



51...exf4

The last practical chance was 51...♗xc4, but Black should still be lost: 52.♗xc4 gxf4 53.♔g1 ♔e7 54.♔f2 f5 55.♔f3 ♔f6 56.h4 ♔e7 57.♔e2 e4 58.♔d2 ♔f6 59.♔c3 ♔e5 60.♗e2, and Black is out of counterplay and out of luck.

52.♘xa5 f3 53.gxf3 ♗xf3+ 54.♔g1 ♗d1 55.♗b5 ♔e7 56.♘c4 ♗f3 57.a5 f6 58.a6 ♔d8 59.♔f2 ♗h1 60.♘e3

With ♗c4-d5 coming, Black decided to call it a day.

Of course, I had no idea during the game how historically significant it would be. Judit announced her retirement the next day, so this may have been her last game of chess. One day I'll be able to tell my grandchildren that I was the last man ever to beat Judit Polgar in a professional game.

While I am very proud of this win over a great chess player, part of me wishes that her last game had involved sacrificing a bunch of pieces and delivering checkmate, typical of the ferocious style that propelled her into the world's top 10. I wish her nothing but the best in whatever else life will bring her. ■

“I am really happy that my favourite magazine is now available on iPad”

– Judit Polgar –

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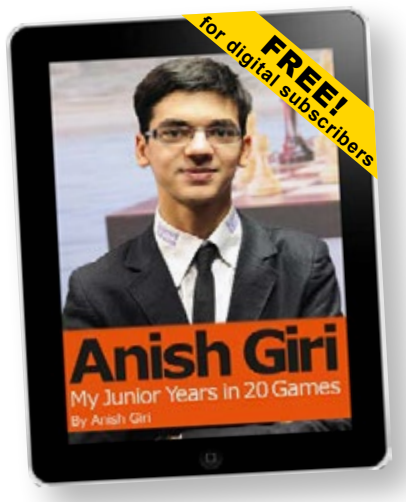

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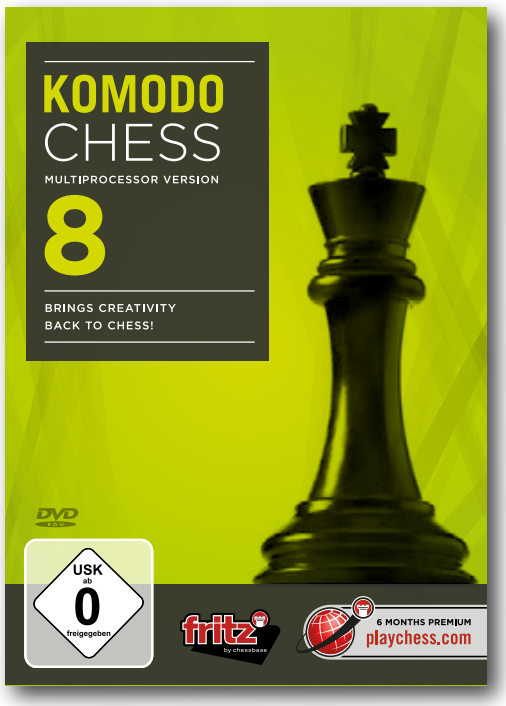
Komodo Chess 8 – the new No. 1!



Komodo is a chess program that is different from the rest. Its search makes greater use of extensions than any other top engine, which results in a slightly lower average depth, helps the actual playing strength significantly. It also allows Komodo to often see deeper than any other engine, even if it is displaying a lower search depth. The evaluation differs from its main rivals because unlike the automated tuning generally employed the Komodo evaluation represents a blend of both automated tuning and the judgment of a grandmaster and computer expert (Larry Kaufman). The programming team have avoided terms and weights that don't make sense to him, even if they happen to test a bit positively. Automated evaluations are subject to rather large sample error, and applying some chess judgment appears to be beneficial, both in results and in the reasonableness of reported evaluations.

Komodo is primarily known for superb positional play. Of course it also one of the top few engines in tactical strength, but the programmers have not been willing to sacrifice positional play just to score better on tactical problem sets. It is generally recognized that all good engines are far stronger tactically than any human player, but that when positional judgment is involved, top grandmasters are still superior in many positions to any engine. Therefore I think it makes sense to emphasize positional play rather than tactical skill; it is better to improve one's weakest point rather than just to further improve the strongest feature.

Komodo is especially useful for opening analysis, because as an opening specialist Larry Kaufman has always paid close attention to checking whether the program's evaluations in the opening agree in general with accepted theory. Another point in which Komodo excels is the play and evaluation of positions with material imbalance, which it handles more correctly than other top engines. The endgame of Komodo has been improved by the use of Syzygy tablebases, which are considered the best for actual play and game analysis as they provide only the most essential information to save time and memory.

Another unique feature in Komodo is its superior handling of multiple processors. This is most noticeable when using eight or more cores. There is little doubt that Komodo 8 is and will remain the top rated commercial chess engine on most rating lists.

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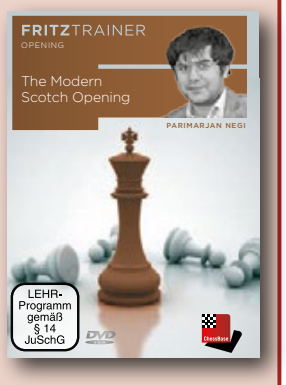
Parimarjan Negi: The Modern Scotch Opening



The Scotch has long been associated with exciting play, although people often doubt it's positional base. But the opening has evolved from the swashbuckling games of the 19th century to become a sound, but aggressive, alternative to the evergreen Spanish. In his first Fritz-Trainer DVD, Parimarjan Negi looks at the latest revolution in Scotch theory that has completely changed white's plans, and once again brought back the interest of the world's elite. Negi presents not only the white strategies in detail but also outlines a dynamic way for Black to counter this latest trend.

Parimarjan Negi (21) became the youngest GM in the world in 2006, and since then has won many international events, including the Asian Championship in 2012. At the chess olympiad in Tromso he won bronze with India, with a 2730 Elo performance on board one.

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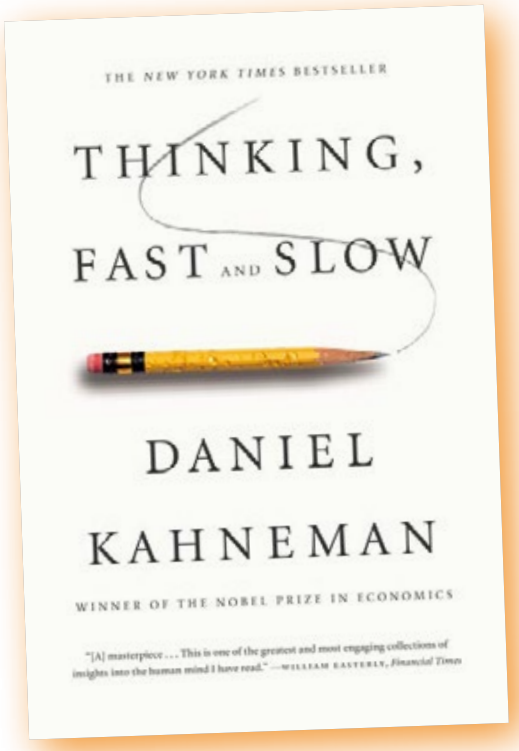
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"[A] masterpiece . . . This is one of the greatest and most engaging collections of insights into the human mind I have read." —WILLIAM EASTERLY, Financial Times

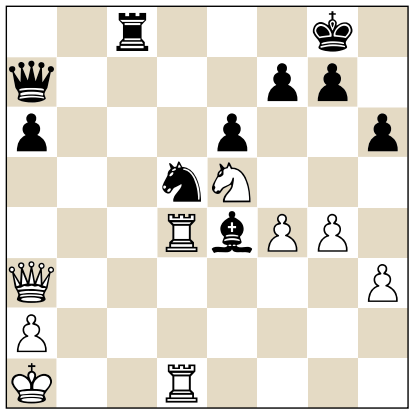
A good thing to know about Calculation

Daniel Kahneman is a professor of psychology at Princeton and the 2002 Nobel Laureate in Economics for his work on decision-making. But to chess players all over the world he is mainly known for his 2011 book *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, which summarizes all his discoveries over many decades. This 499-page psychology book is an unlikely bestseller, but it brilliantly explains some things that a lot of strong chess players have known, consciously or subconsciously, for a long time. It is the chess book of the decade – without being a chess book at all...

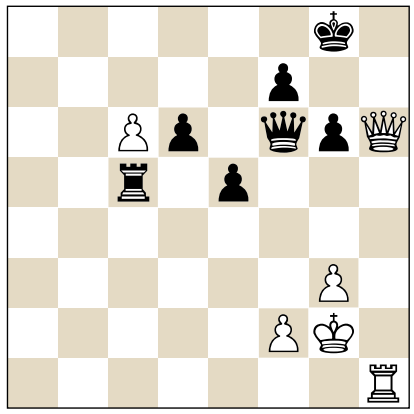
Jacob Aagaard

Based on one of the key ideas in this book, the one providing its title, I will discuss pattern recognition and calculation and explain what I think the difference is. I have had my opinion on this for a long time, but it is pleasant to now be able to lean on '*certainly the most important psychologist alive today*' (according to Steven Pinker, a great student of the brain).

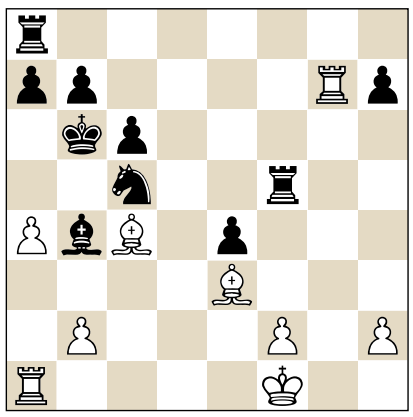
In order to get the most out of the article, I would recommend that you try to find the best move/sequence in these four positions.



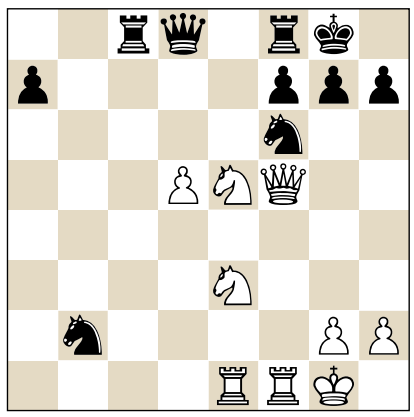
Michael Adams-Yuri Razuvaev
Slough 1997 European Club Cup
Black to play



Ivo Timmermans-Toon van Lanen
Netherlands 2012
White to play



Pavel Eljanov-Anish Giri
Ohrid 2009 European Club Cup
White to play



Kacper Piorun-Michal Krasenkow
Stockholm 2013
White to play – this one is really difficult and requires time

Thinking, Fast and Slow

In ***Thinking, Fast and Slow*** Kahneman explains how the brain has two different ways to think. We have our own words for these, but psychologists obviously go with the most innocuous terminology, **System 1** and **System 2**.

System 1 is described as being *fast, automatic, frequent, emotional, stereotypical* and *subconscious*. It handles all the things that we already know how to do. It assists me in touch-typing this article; in stringing sentences together while watching *Person of Interest – Season 2* on my iPad.

In chess we call this *intuition* or *pattern recognition*.

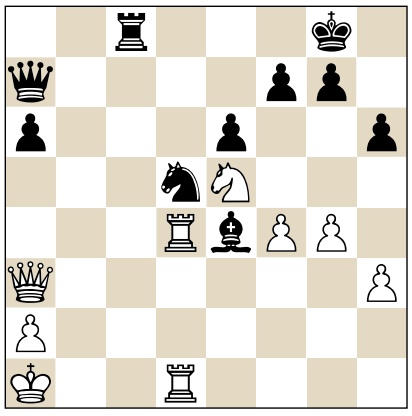
System 2 is *slow, effortful, infrequent, logical, calculating,* and *conscious*. When we try to solve unusual and complex problems, we use the brain in this way. The brain is very reluctant to turn to this way of thinking, as it requires us to stop everything else we are currently working on.

In chess this is basically everything else. The two main ways to divide up what we can do with this would be *strategy* and *calculation*. Please allow me to offer a possible definition (read simplification) of the two.

Strategy is not the same as *positional play*, which is short term, mainly intuitive and void of surprises. Strategy sees into future developments and plans for them; for example by choosing the correct one of two natural-looking moves, although at times it means choosing a counter-intuitive, anti-positional move. Who knows, we might return to talking more about this at a later date.

Calculation is probably the most confusing chess term of all. Most people will agree that it relates to the working out of sequences of moves, also known as variations, quite frequently consisting of tactics, though not exclusively so. What confuses people is that *seeing variations* is not actually calculation. (This is debatable, but that there is a difference is the real point.)

I am sure I have lost you by now, so allow me to turn to a concrete example in order to make things a little less abstract.



Michael Adams-Yuri Razuvaev
Slough 1997
European Club Cup

Black has a pawn for the exchange, as well as a strong knight on d5 and a much safer king. Razuvaev played a very natural-looking move, but was subsequently unable to squeeze more out of the position than a draw.
39...♖c3? 40.♕a4 ♕c5 41.♖c4 ♕e3 42.♕e8+ ♔h7 43.♘d7 ♖xc4 44.♘f8+ ½-½

Grandmaster Jacob Aagaard is the co-founder of Quality Chess and the creator of the *Excelling*, *Grandmaster Preparation* and *Grandmaster Repertoire* series. His latest book *Endgame Play* was released in May.

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This exercise is in principle very simple, yet very few of the grandmasters I have shown it to managed to solve it. I can only remember one; and he saw it immediately, which violates the point of the exercise!

What I want the student to train with this position would usually be two things:

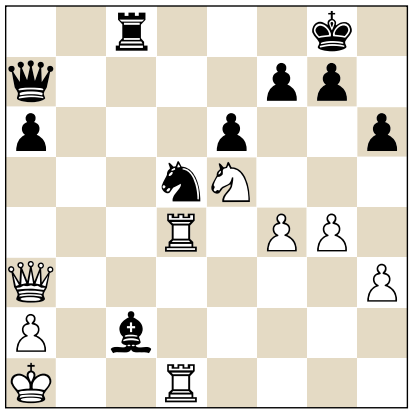
1. To understand that the decision requires calculation and not positional judgement or long-term strategic thinking.
2. To use the technique of *candidate moves* to find the winning move.

The best description I can think of regarding this technique is the one given in Chapter 1 of my book *Excelling at Chess Calculation* (Everyman Chess 2004): **Before you can think, you need to learn how to see**.

I will get colourful in my description in a moment, but for now let us stick to the technique of candidate moves being **the act of actively looking for moves/ideas you do not see automatically**. In 2004, I recommended that the way to do this was to **slow down the variations running through your head**, in order to be in control of the process. What I did not know then, but can see now, is that I recommended to **actively turn on System 2** in order to find additional options to those provided by our intuition (System 1).

Imagine that a lot of variations are dancing around on the board in front of you. Some of them jump straight into your head and just appear, seemingly out of nowhere (confirming your genius), while others do not. Learning to catch those evasive little scoundrels is what calculation is all about.

The solution to this exercise is based on the overloading of the rook on d1. Black has a winning position after 39...♗c2!!.



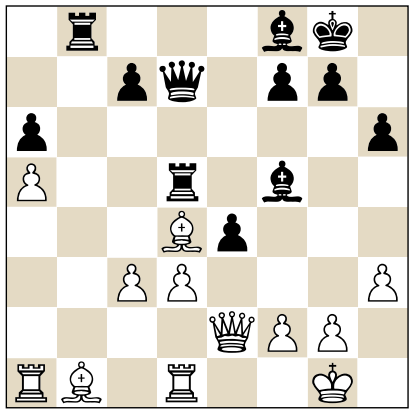
White has no defence. For example 40.♖1d2 ♖b8! or 40.♕c1 f6 41.♘f3 ♖c3, in both cases with an absolutely winning position for Black.

I guess one of the reasons why this position is so difficult, despite the moves in the variation only running in single digits, is that the targets are obscure. Who would be looking for mate in three in the starting position?

Looking for the moves you do not see

As we know from the limited psychological investigations into chess, most of the decisions we make are deeply founded in our subconscious (System 1). But just because we can see that this is highly influential, does not mean that it covers the whole picture. The MRI scanners are very crude instruments and cannot tell us that much about what really happens in the brain. The areas in the brain that flare up in the scanner are not neat little departments that deal with clearly defined responsibilities. The one hundred billion neurons we have contain up to ten thousand connections all over the brain. Everything is happening all over the brain, but some areas are more active in some situations than others, which is what we see on the brain scanners.

In my opinion, it makes sense to combine the few things we can learn from science with our real-world observations. An example is the following famous position.

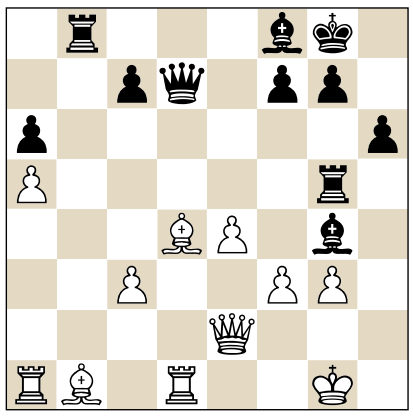


Peter Svidler-Magnus Carlsen
FIDE Candidates', London 2013
Black to play

Carlsen played **25...exd3**, and slowly ground down his opponent with great technique. But while the game was going on, computers all over the world lit up.

> 'Learning to catch those evasive little scoundrels is what calculation is all about.'

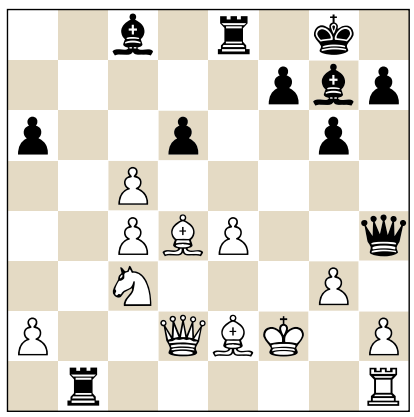
Black had a nice tactical option in 25...♗xh3!, which cannot be taken. White has to take on e4 and we would quickly reach this interesting position: 26.dxe4 ♖g5 27.g3 ♗g4 28.f3.



Many commentators, including famous grandmasters, felt that this was the point where Carlsen missed something. The winning point is quite nice, making use of the inactive rook on b8 (see *Chess Is a Team Sport,* New In Chess 2014/2, page 74): 28...♖b2!! 29.♕xb2 ♗xf3, and White cannot save both the king and the rook on d1. For example: 30.♖d2 ♕h3 31.♗d3 ♕xg3+ 32.♔f1 ♖h5 33.♖g2 ♗xg2+ 34.♕xg2 ♕xd3+, and Black wins.

If I had not been in London, I would probably have made the same assumption as these GMs. But I was there at the press conference, and I saw Carlsen's confusion when asked why he did not take on h3. '*Where?*' was his question. When they showed him the position he took 10 seconds to calculate the variations, before concluding that it was '*completely winning*'.

Obviously, the now World Champion knew about sacrificing his bishop on h3, but what about the ...♖b2! move? Look at this position for a second.



Smbat Lputian-Garry Kasparov
Tbilisi 1976

The 13-year-old black player crowned a nice combination with 19...♖b2!! 20.gxh4 ♖xd2 21.♗xg7 ♔xg7 22.♔e3 ♖c2 23.♔d3 ♖xc3+ 24.♔xc3 dxc5 and won the superior ending with excellent technique.

I think we can firmly assume that if I know this pattern, Carlsen does too. So pattern application is only a part of the story. It is *System 1* thinking. If Carlsen had slowed down and considered his options, rather than following his intuition, he would have seen taking on h3 quite quickly and have cut the game short. We know

this, because this is what actually happened at the press conference.

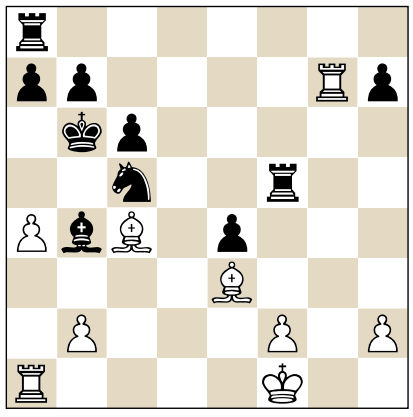
Training *seeing*

I do not know about you, but I cannot do anything complicated. At times, though, I can do a lot of simple things that combine together to something quite effective that can look quite impressive. I use this observation to simplify my training methods. When working with a student, I will ask him to focus on one or two things only. The way we work on this is by solving a lot of problems and by trying to slow down to make sure we are actually looking for things we would not have seen automatically.

It requires patience and some discipline, but it is also fun. All my students like doing this training, though at times it can be frustrating. Most importantly, they all improve, and so far it looks as if their improvement is permanent.

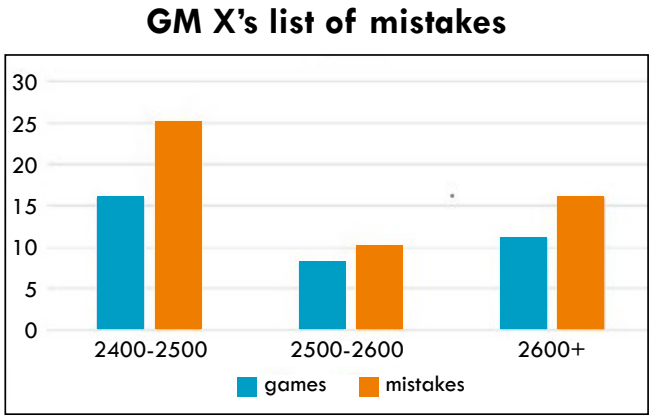
A few positions

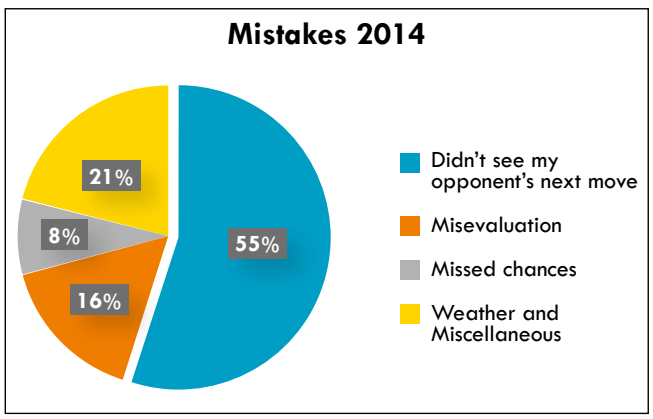
Let us end this article with a few of the training positions I have given to strong grandmasters and discuss the mistakes they make. The first is a brilliant combination by the multi-talented Pavel Eljanov.

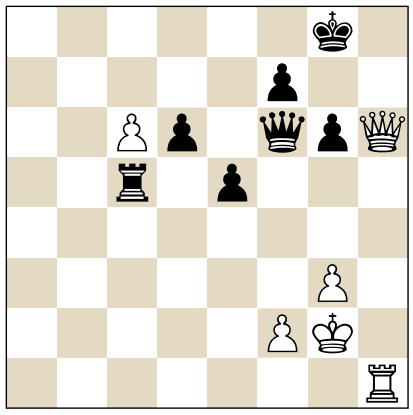


Pavel Eljanov-Anish Giri
Ohrid European Club Cup 2009

The most popular suggestion is 25. a5+ ♗xa5 26.♖a4, which prepares b2-b4 and seemingly wins a piece. But here the technique of candidate moves (just looking for options) *at the point where we would normally stop*, is very important. If we see this idea, we also need to look for what could be wrong with it (see the end of the article).
In the game, Pavel won after the brilliant **25.a5+! ♗xa5 26.♖xb7+! ♔xb7 27.♖xa5**, and the pin along the fifth rank gave him a decisive advantage.







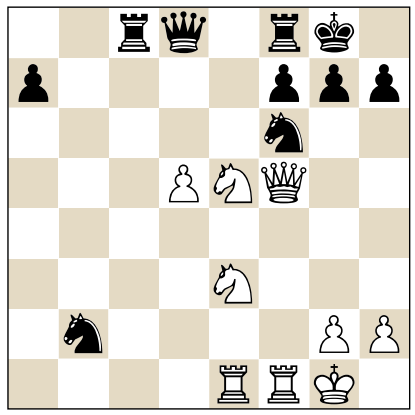
Ivo Timmermans-Toon van Lanen
Netherlands 2012
White to play

Playing in a team match, Ivo thought for almost 40 minutes, determinedly looking for a win and seriously spooking his team mates. Eventually he found it. **44.♕h3!! ♖xc6** Black cannot allow a check on c8 and mate on h8. And after 44...♔f8 White wins with 45.♕c8+ ♔e7 46.♕d7+ ♔f8 47. c7. **45.♕d7** Black resigned.

I am currently training **GM X**, a very talented player, who wanted to improve his positional play. Having tested him with 30 mixed exercises, I found he had an urgent need to learn to calculate. I asked him to look at all serious mistakes he made in the seven or eight tournaments he has played this year and put them in categories. The graphs on this page show the result of this analysis. After this we started working on candidate moves. Although he is a household name, he failed to solve these two exercises.

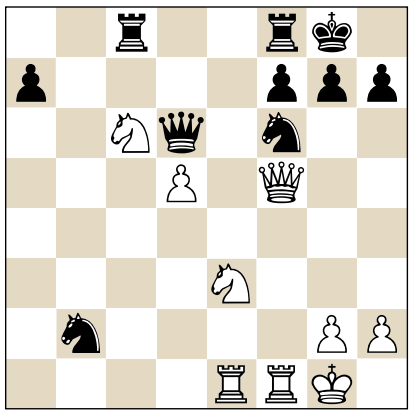
When I have worked with a player for a while, we start on more complicated calculation. We train techniques like *elimination, comparison*, and so on. But most of all we work on the ***compounding of candidate moves***. In other words, we focus a lot on System 2 thinking, applying it with greater scope and precision.

The following is a typical training position.



Kacper Piorun-Michal Krasenkow
Stockholm 2013
White to play

25.♘c6
This move is not difficult, but starting one move earlier can help stretch the student's mind. I am sure that Piorun played it without too much thought.
25...♕d6!
The only move that can confuse things. 25...♕c7 26.♕c2!, and the knight is in trouble.



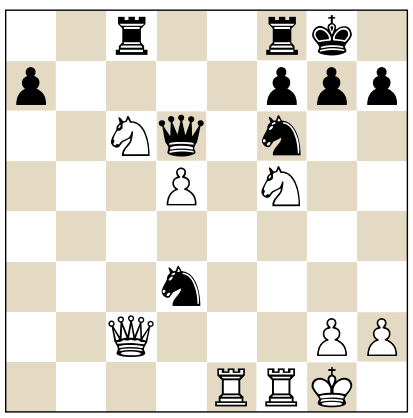
26.♕g5!

A brilliant candidate move. White is threatening not only ♘f5, but also ♕xg7+.

26.♕c2? looks like a winning move, but if you look carefully, you will see that Black can save the knight with

> 'Jonathan Rowson once compared learning skills in chess to learning to drive'

26...♘d3!! 27.♖d1 (**GM A** believed that White was winning after 27.♘f5, but there is a hole in his variation:

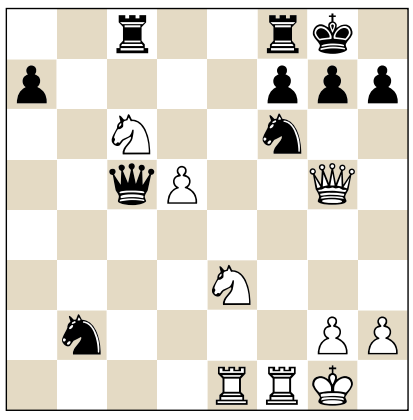


27...♘xe1 28.♘ce7+ ♔h8 29.♕xc8 and White would be winning if Black did not have 29...♕b6+, when it is he who wins. An excellent example of why we need to end our calculation with a candidate moves sweep) 27...♘b4 28.♘f5!, White is still fighting for an advantage, although Black has reasonable drawing chances.

26.♖f2? looks winning on account of 26...♖fe8? 27.♖xb2 ♘xd5 28.♕xd5 ♕xd5 29.♘xd5 ♖xe1+ 30.♔f2 ♖ce8 31.♘ce7+!, with good winning chances (as found by **GM B**).

But the method of comparison tells us to investigate 26...♖ce8! as well, where Black is fine, as there is no rook hanging on c8.

26...♕c5 Trying to deal with White's two main threats, but this move has its own problems.

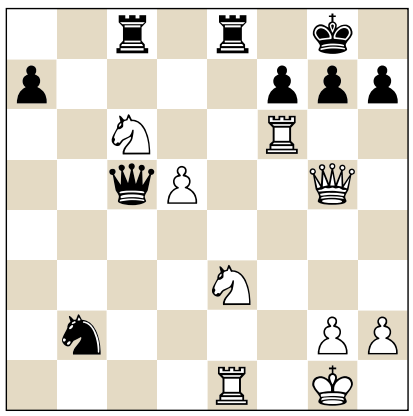


27.♖xf6? Obviously it is very tempting to take a free piece.

27.♖c1! wins on the spot, as pointed out by **GM C**. A quick candidates sweep would have ended the game here.

27...♖fe8!?

27...♖ce8 was also possible. Here White only has one clear way to win the game: 28.♔h1!! and White has an extra piece. A key line is 28...♖xe3 29.♕xe3 ♕xe3 30.♖xe3 gxf6 31.d6, and the pawn steals the show.



28.♘e5?

White was still winning after 28.♖f2!! ♘d3 29.♖c2, with the point of 29...♖xe3 30.♕xe3 ♕xc2 31.♕e8+.

28...♕c3! 29.♖ef1?

Trends are very difficult to reverse. 29.♘3g4 ♕xe1+ 30.♖f1 ♖xe5 31.♘xe5 ♕e4 32.♘xf7 would still have given Black practical problems.

29...♕xe5 30.♕xe5 ♖xe5 31.♖6f3 f6

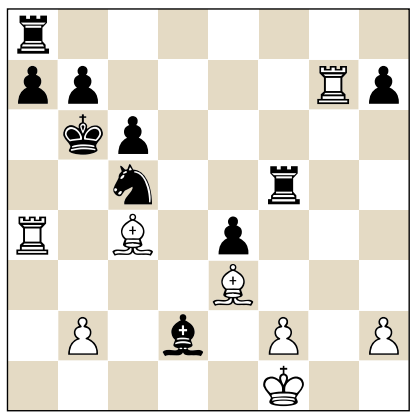
White now has to make the draw. More mistakes followed in what was probably raging time-trouble. Eventually the game did indeed end in a draw.

Final words

Training people to pay attention to a new dimension of chess (as it is with most people I have encountered) is not dissimilar to learning anything else in life. Jonathan Rowson once compared learning skills in chess to learning to drive (which always obsesses people when they are in the process). I like this comparison. At some point you are going 70mph down the motorway having a conversation. The action is automatic. Then something happens and you stop talking, stop listening and concentrate on using your skills in the best possible way. You apply System 2 attention and control to your System 1 patterns. This is exactly what we train.

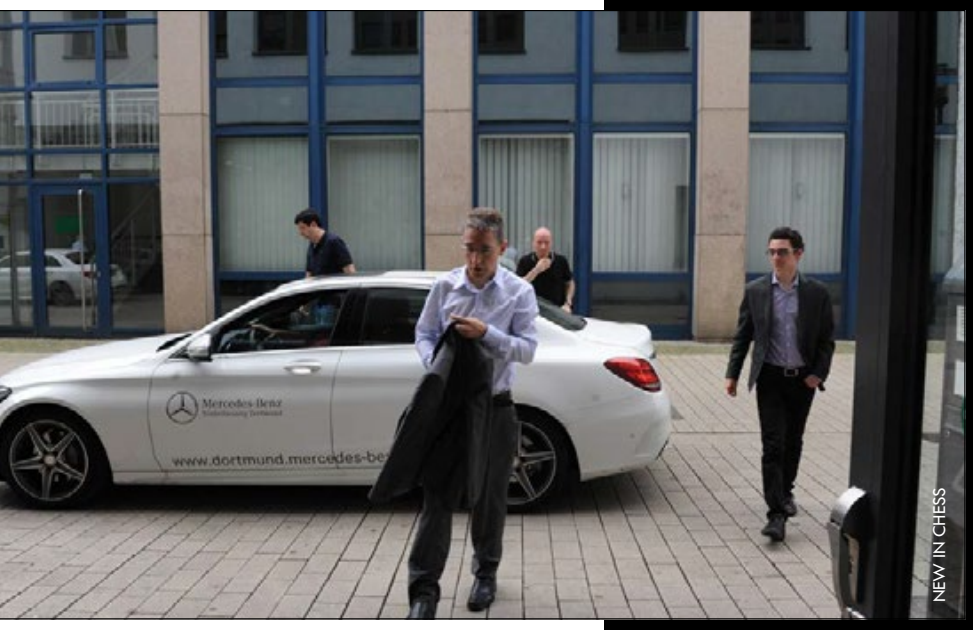
The Adjournment

In Eljanov-Giri, the combination with 25.a5+ ♗xa5 26.♖a4? fails to 26...♗d2!!.



Black has a large advantage! *Candidates, prophylaxis* and *System 2*. As the Danish idiom goes: a beloved child has many names... ■

Fabiano Caruana has bigger goals



Champions league Mercedes. Kramnik (10 wins), Adams (last year's winner), Chuchelov and Caruana (winner in 2012), arrive for Round 6.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

'Won Dortmund with 5½/7, broke 2800, reached #3 in the world. All in all, not a bad week!' For a soft-spoken introverted person like Fabiano Caruana, this celebratory tweet almost sounded extravagant. But then he had every reason to be pleased with himself. In Kramnik town, the 21-year-old Italian was in charge from the word go. Collecting points here and there he outclassed the field with a 2934 performance and decided a seven-round elite tournament with one round to spare. Isn't that cool?

Fabiano Caruana took his rating over 2800. ‘I think it’s more important to keep playing at a high level throughout the year, throughout a number of years, than to achieve a certain rating once.’

Dortmund

At the start of the penultimate round, Stefan Koth walks on stage to introduce the games the spectators are about to watch. The game of the day, according to the tournament director of the Sparkassen Chess-Meeting, is Kramnik-Leko. Certainly, it cannot be denied that Kramnik and Leko have played a prominent part in the history of the tournament. The first ever time they met was in Dortmund in 1995. This is their 111th encounter overall, and it's the 23rd time that they will be sitting opposite each other in Dortmund. Kramnik won in 2006 and 2013, but all their other games ended in a draw. What's more, over the years the Russian has won Dortmund a record 10 times, while the Hungarian was victorious three times. But in this 42nd edition, Kramnik is in disastrous shape and his chances of notching up an 11th win have long evaporated, while Leko's chances remain only theoretical. There was, therefore, a far more logical choice for the game of the day: that on the next table, between the winner of 2012, Fabiano Caruana, and last year's winner Mickey Adams. Caruana is on a roll, and if he wins today, no one will be able to catch him anymore.

Yet, in a way, the tournament director's *faux pas* was understandable, as Dortmund gives you the feeling that everything always stays very much the same. Kramnik and Leko top the list of players who may safely be called regulars, the posters and brochures have not been altered since time immemorial, and the pictures from the closing ceremonies are so identical that it is often hard to tell in which year they were taken.

Given the fact that none of the eight participants made their debut in Dortmund, the only change this year was the venue. As the Dortmund Stadttheater was closed for renovation, the chess players were moved to the Orchesterzentrum NRW, a slightly smaller but otherwise identical theatre. As always, the event was well attended, although the early rounds suffered from the inevitable clash with the World Cup in Brazil, where the German team was doing so well, while the final rounds had to compete with some great summer weather.

None of this seemed to bother Fabiano Caruana. In the first round he chose the Dutch Defence to grind down bottom-seed David Baramidze in a long game. The next day he won again with a final combination that you can only dream of. When he spotted it during the game, Caruana made a mental note to show it to his opponent, Ruslan Ponomariov, after the game. Understandably, his heart jumped when he actually got the chance to execute it on the board (see Caruana's notes to this brilliancy further down – DJtG).

Caruana won his third game in Round 4, when he proved to be better prepared than Georg Meier, who repeated a sharp French variation they had also played last year. And indeed, in the penultimate round, Caruana did play the game of the day, when a new idea against the Berlin Wall proved effective against Mickey Adams. With a one-and-a-half point lead over Leko and Naiditsch after a mere six rounds, nothing could go wrong anymore for the Italian ace.

In the last round, Peter Leko may have cherished some hopes to seriously test the tournament winner, but he achieved little, and after 31 moves a draw was the result. The three other games on the final day all ended in white victories. Adams's win over Baramidze didn't come as a big shock, but the other two games were quite sensational. Ruslan Ponomariov compounded Vladimir Kramnik's misery with a hard-fought win, while Georg Meier finished in shared second place thanks to an equally hard-fought win against Arkadij Naiditsch.

Meier faced a double task in his last

NEW IN CHESS

As the Dortmund Stadttheater was closed for renovation, the chess players were moved to the Orchesterzentrum NRW, a slightly smaller but otherwise identical theatre.

game. Not only did he need a win to finish as the best German, but he also knew that he had limited time, around six hours, to do so, as he had come to the theatre with his suitcase, having to catch a flight to Copenhagen to play in the Politiken Cup. He succeeded, but the main achievement the German grandmaster will remember from Dortmund 2014 was his sensational win as Black in the very first round. In his notes to this game further down, Meier is rightly bamboozled by the fact that after a mere 10 moves, Vladimir Kramnik, playing White, was already lost.

While the last games of the final round kept the spectators enthralled in the Orchestra Centre NRW, the happy winner sat down in the players' hotel to look back on an ultra-smooth performance.

'I played quite well and I wasn't in any danger, which is pretty rare, at least for me. The only thing was that many players were not at their best. Kramnik had a really bad tournament. But I can only control my own play and I think I did it well. I showed some decent preparation. It's a pretty big advantage to get the positions you want, to be able to impose your will on your opponent. And that's what I managed to do in a number of games here. Against Kramnik I showed a very rare move (8…b6), and it was clear that he immediately felt uncomfortable. Against Adams I showed a new idea (14.♗e3), which gave me the initiative, and he was under pressure for the entire game.

'(In my preparation) I like thinking about how my opponent may react, especially when we are looking at not very concrete positions in which many moves are possible, like the Berlin, and the computer is sometimes not so helpful. It may indicate that the position is good for one side, when in fact it is not. Against Kramnik it was the same story. After 8…b6 there are many different approaches for both players, and the computer is pretty unhelpful. I more or less predicted the next couple of moves that he played and had analysed them. That helped.'

DAGOBERT KOHLMEIER

Fabiano Caruana and his trainer Vladimir Chuchelov had good reason to be satisfied. 'We've gained a bit of a reputation. People realize that it's not easy to face us in the openings.'

Do you also look at their body language when you play what you prepared?
'I don't know if I am such a good psychologist. A guy like Kramnik is very good at hiding whatever emotions he is feeling. Actually, most of the top players are good actors in that sense. You don't really know whether they are uncomfortable or feeling OK. Players like Aronian, Kramnik, Carlsen, they are good psychologists as well. It helps them a lot. It's probably the hallmark of many of the top players and the champions in the past as well. So maybe it's one area that I should work on.'

> 'I am quite happy that I won Dortmund, but the thing is that there is going to be a million more games.'

Do you feel that you are easier to read, that you betray your feelings at the board?
'No, I am more or less always nervous; that's the impression I give. But that's not always the case. I don't think I am very expressive over the board, not like for example Nakamura. He usually doesn't hide his emotions. I do try to be smart about it. You don't want your opponent to be too comfortable.'

In general you don't show your emotions much. You win this tournament and there is no clear joy.
'I am actually quite happy (laughs), and I do get upset, for example after my last game against Karjakin in Norway. But the thing is that there's going to be a million more games. There is not much time to be satisfied, because there is going to be another tournament soon and another tournament after that. And everything can be reversed in one or two games, so it's important to stay focused.'

Do you have to prove to yourself or to the outside world that you deserve the position that you are occupying at the moment?
'It's clear that I've been at the top for some time and I think I do deserve my position. But if I lose it, I will probably have deserved that as well! (laughs) There will be ups and downs for sure; that's pretty clear. But I don't feel the need to prove anything. I just want to keep on playing well and having good results. I mean, winning a tournament like Dortmund is one thing, but there are bigger goals. There's the world championship cycle, which I am not actually in at the moment. Although I don't think anyone knows what the qualification process will be.'

You work together with Vladimir Chuchelov; you prepare the openings together. Who chooses what?
'The final decision is mine, but he gives me his input and I usually listen to him. I find that his choices are very often very good. The Dutch (against Baramidze) was actually my idea, I think, because I wanted to fight for a win. We had time before the tournament to discuss these things, because the pairings were known a month in advance. We've gained a bit of a reputation. People realize that it's not easy to face us in the openings. Clearly a lot of work has been put into it.'

Magnus Carlsen says that he basically wants to win every game. That's his attitude. Do you have that same wish?
'Well, I want to, but I don't expect to. You try to. If I get a chance, I will take it against anyone, but I don't think that he is trying to win every game… Maybe he wants to. I think we all want to… Maybe not everyone imagines that they can, and it's clear that he knows he can beat anyone, and if you make the tiniest mistake against him he is ready to pounce on it. But you usually don't get chances when you're playing Aronian or Kramnik or Magnus with Black. The best you are going to hope for is equality from the opening and probably a draw if all goes well.'

Things looked so smooth, the way you cruised to victory.
'Behind the scenes it wasn't that easy. The start of a tournament is always a bit rocky; you don't know how you're going to play and how the others are going to play. After a couple of rounds it becomes clear who is leading the tournament and who is in bad form. The last difficult moment was against Kramnik. He is a great player and he is always dangerous, even when he is not in good form. And it's clear that he was pressing in all his games. The opening was the decisive factor. He had probably never looked at it and hadn't expected it at all, and I got a very good position from the open-

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ing, with more time. After that game I don't think there were any difficulties at all.'

Even your win against Adams looked easy.
'He could have put up more resistance. Again, these Berlin endgames are always very hard to assess. I felt I was slightly better throughout the game. But it was clear he had many defensive chances.'

Is it a challenge to break these drawish defences like the Marshall and the Berlin, which you've been doing quite successfully?
'The thing is, you have to. There are openings that are theoretically well respected. People go to them and everyone wants a free ride, so... If nobody is showing anything against the Berlin, then everyone starts playing it. I have to work on it and try, and show ideas. And I manage to set my opponents some problems, which is at least a start.'

Do you feel you understand this opening better than two years ago?
'Yes, definitely. That's why you work on chess; it always pays off. Novelties come and go, but understanding stays.'

You finished the tournament over 2800...
'Objectively it's just a number, 2799, 2800. It's one point higher, but it's a different feeling when you see the number. It can all change in one tournament. It's nice to achieve this rating; obviously not many people have done it, but I still don't consider it a big achievement. I think it's more important to keep playing at a high level throughout the year, throughout a number of years, than to achieve a certain rating once.'

Which in your case nevertheless means that you intend to be a stable 2800 player.
'Yes, I want to challenge these players more and more, and gain on them.'

How do you work on aspects other than openings? Do you do endgame exercises?
'In the past, but now I'll do some tactical puzzles, just to keep sharp. But I think that playing and working on openings is usually enough.'

Amateurs might wonder how easily you'd deal with knight and bishop against king, for example.
'That I won't have any problems with. (Smiles) I think I could do that when I was about 8.'

'That's why you work on chess; it always pays off. Novelties come and go, but understanding stays.'

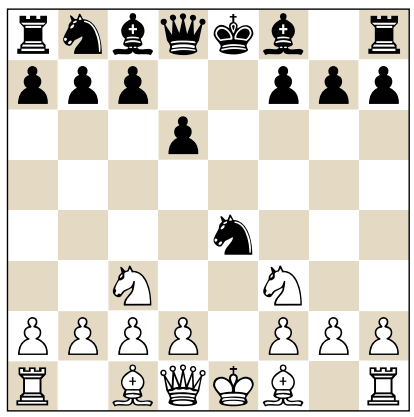
You told me that you consider yourself an Italian, although you were born and raised in the US. How does feeling Italian express itself?
'I never lived in Italy, but I do like to be in the country. I don't get many chances. My Italian is improving. I am not fluent, but I can communicate with my team. It's been a decade now, so I should have improved a bit by now.'

What do you do when you're not playing chess?
'It's pretty quiet. Not much exciting is going on. I know some people in Spain (where he lives – DJtG) that I may go to a movie with. During tournaments I read and I watch a TV show or a movie in the evening. Here I read *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim* by David Sedaris, a book of short stories that I got years ago. And I saw one movie, *The Wolf of Wall Street*.'

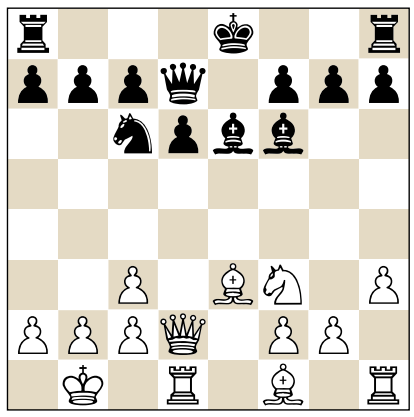
NOTES BY
Fabiano Caruana

RG 3.5 – C42
Fabiano Caruana
Ruslan Ponomariov
Dortmund 2014 (2)

The previous day I had won a long and exhausting game against David Baramidze, which might explain my rather sedate choice of opening in this game.
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.♘xe5 d6 4.♘f3 ♘xe4 5.♘c3



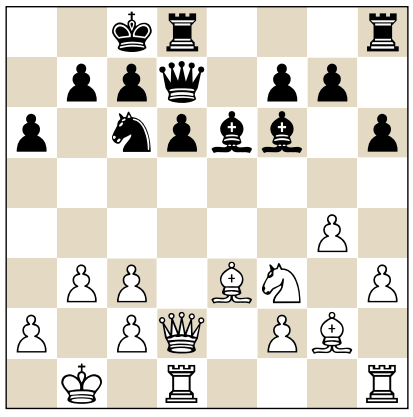
The modern treatment of the Petroff. It might seem a bit innocuous to the uninitiated, but this quiet line carries with it a surprising amount of positional venom.
5...♘xc3 6.dxc3 ♗e7 7.♗e3 ♘c6 8.♕d2 In our previous game in this variation, Ruslan castled kingside. This time he goes for the safer queenside castling, where he is unlikely to meet a crude attack.
8...♗e6 9.0-0-0 ♕d7 10.♔b1 ♗f6 11.h3!?



For this game I decided to try an uncommon plan with g4 and ♗g2.

Years ago, I preferred the more straightforward 11.h4 and won a nice game against Landa, but since then remedies have been found for Black.

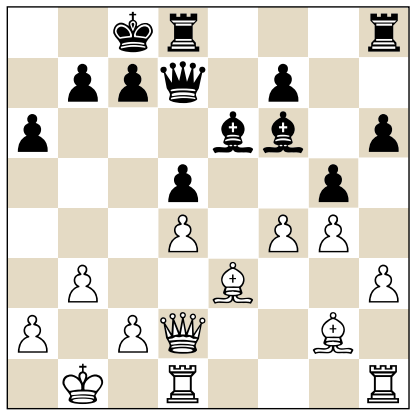
11...h6 12.b3 a6 13.g4 0-0-0 14.♗g2



14...g5? I was expecting the natural 14...♔b8. After 14...♔b8 my intention was 15.♘g1!? with the idea of playing ♘e2-f4 or f4-f5, depending on Black's response. Although White's play is slow, Black remains under some pressure. In any case, this was better for him than the game.

15.♘d4 ♘xd4 16.cxd4 d5 17.f4

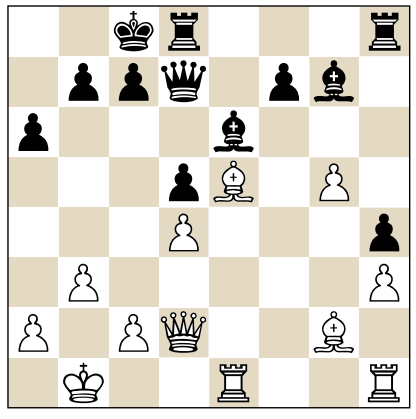
Now Black's kingside is weakened.



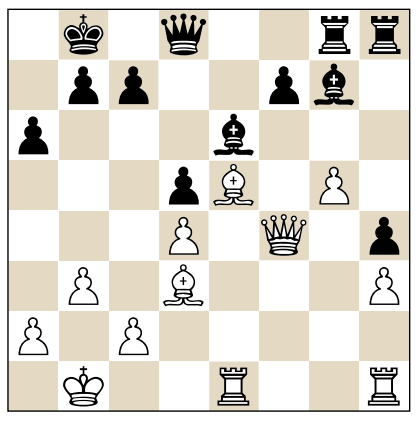
17...gxf4 18.♗xf4 h5 19.g5 ♗g7 20.♖de1 I wasn't very comfortable allowing ...h4, but I felt it was necessary to act fast to prevent ...f6. I saw no clear-cut way to continue after 20.h4 f6.

20...h4 21.♗e5

Now it seems I have a grip over the dark squares, but due to the weakness of g5 and h3, it's difficult to make any inroads into Black's position.



21...♖dg8 22.♕f4 ♕d8 23.♗f1 ♔b8 24.♗d3



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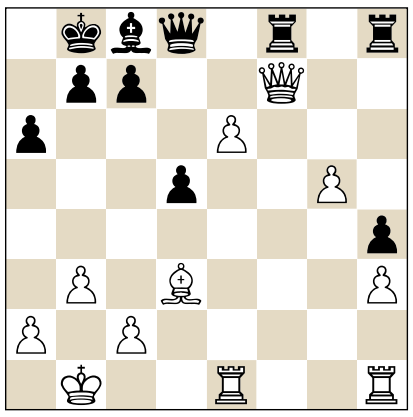
Creating the threat of g6. I felt this was a clever manoeuvre, but Ruslan quickly responded with an even more clever defence.

24...♗c8! I overlooked this.

25.♔b2

I was initially attracted to 25.♕xf7 ♗xe5 26.dxe5 ♖f8 27.e6!?.

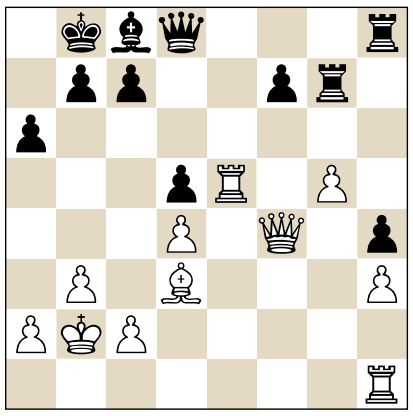


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

which seemed highly promising if Black accepts the queen sacrifice. Then I noticed 27...♕xg5! 28.♕g6 ♕e7! and the e-pawn is safely blockaded.

25...♗xe5 26.♖xe5 ♖g7

At this point I realized that I have no constructive ideas to improve my position. On the other hand, Black also doesn't want to spoil his ideal setup, so I decided to give him a move.



27.a4 a5 Not entirely ideal, as this weakens the b5-square. I could see Pono was hesitant to play this, but it's difficult to find another move.

28.♔a2 Keeping on waiting...

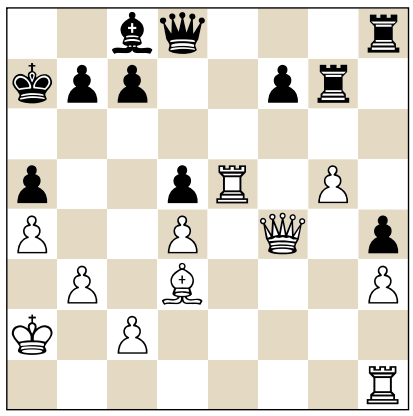
28...♔a7

28...♖hg8 29.♕xh4 ♖xg5 30.♖xg5 ♕xg5 31.♕xg5 ♖xg5 32.h4 ♖h5 33.♗e2 ♖h6 34.h5 seems dangerous for Black, but because White's king is

> 'I had already seen the winning combination but could hardly believe my good fortune when he fell into it.'

so far from the action, Black shouldn't have many problems defending.

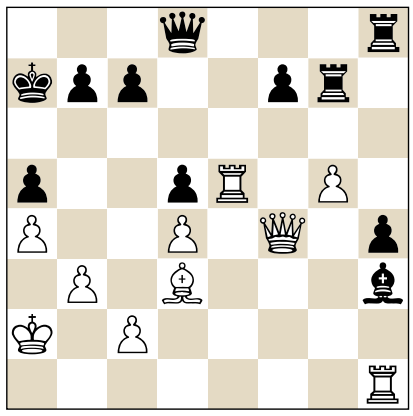
29.♕d2 ♔b8 30.♕f4 ♔a7



31.♖he1 Finally doing something, now that the king is misplaced on a7.

31...♗xh3 32.♖h1

This was the point of my last move. The only chance at progress is to eliminate the h-pawns. 32.♖e7 ♕d6 poses Black no problems.

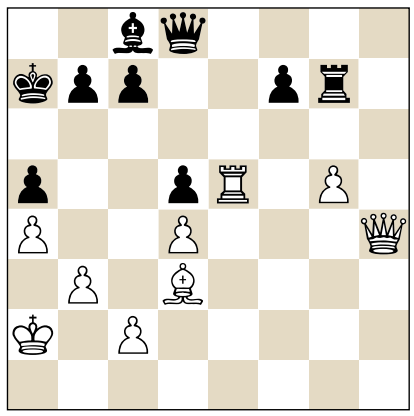


32...♗c8

After 32...♕d7? 33.♕f6 ♖hg8 34.♖e7 ♕c8 35.g6! is immediately decisive.

33.♖xh4 ♖xh4 34.♕xh4

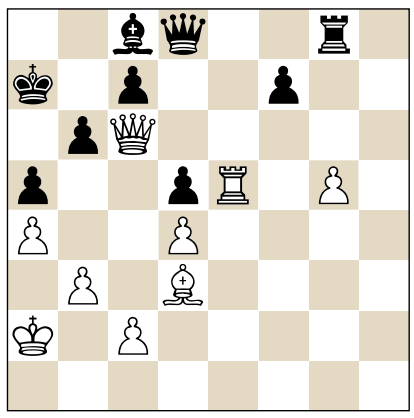
Considering how quickly the game ends from here, it's possible to assume that Black doesn't have significant improvements. In fact, the position is far from lost for Black, although it is rather unpleasant to defend.



34...b6? The first and perhaps already the decisive mistake.

After 34...c6, d5 is securely defended and White will have a hard time breaking down Black's defence.

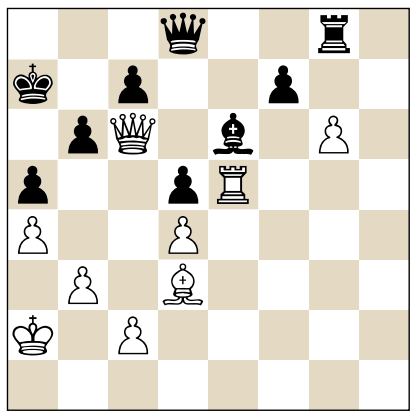
35.♕h6 ♖g8 36.♕c6! A very powerful move, luring Black's bishop to b7.



36...♗e6 The position after 36...♖xg5 37.♖xg5 ♕xg5 38.♕xc7+ ♗b7 39.♕xf7 might be defensible, but I'd rather not endure such a torture.

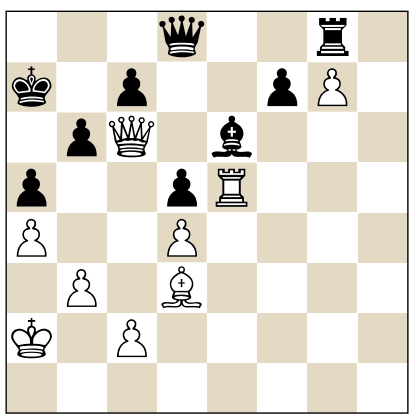
After 36...♗b7 37.♕f6 ♕xf6 38.gxf6 ♔b8 39.♖e7 ♖f8 40.♗b5! is where I finished my calculations during the game. Black is completely passive and likely to be positionally squashed.

37.g6



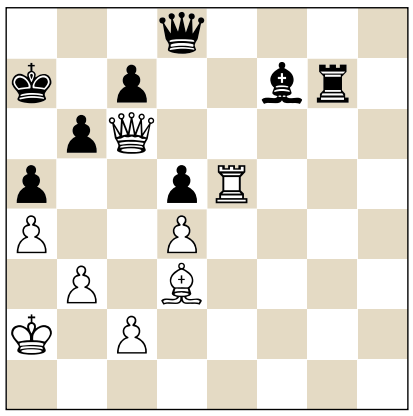
37...♖g7? When he played this move, I became very excited. I had

already seen the winning combination while he was thinking about his 36th move, but could hardly believe my good fortune when he fell into it – so I spent my remaining time double and triple checking.
37...♖f8 38.g7 ♖g8



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

39.♖g5!! is another beautiful end to the game. Black is unable to take the rook because of ♗a6, and has to sit and wait for ♖g1 and ♗h7.
37...♗d7 was the only chance to survive, but it's also pretty close to hopeless: 38.♕xd5 fxg6 39.♗e4 ♕c8 40.♖e7 ♖d8 41.♕f7 ♔b8 42.♕xg6, and besides being down a pawn, Black is also horribly passive with a weak king.
38.gxf7 ♗xf7

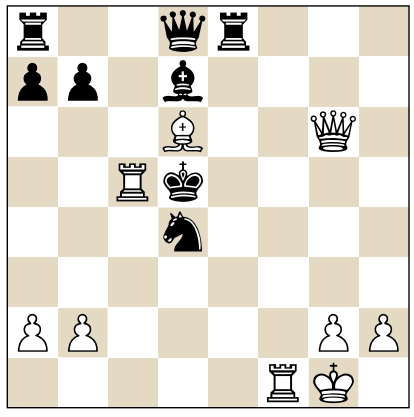


Now comes a double deflection.
39.♖e7! ♕xe7 40.♗a6!
There is no way for Black to stop mate. (Which Ponomariov in great sportsmanlike fashion allowed – ed.)
40...♔xa6 41.♕a8 mate
One of the most satisfying combinations I have ever played!
The rest of the tournament went just as smoothly, and I finished on a solid 5½/7, without any losses.

NOTES BY
Georg Meier

EO 49.10 – A09
Vladimir Kramnik
Georg Meier
Dortmund 2014 (1)

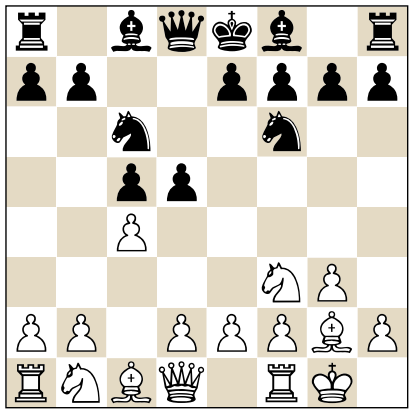
The following game is unbelievable. Vladimir Kramnik finds himself in a strategically lost position after 10 moves as White. I will tell you my recipe for this unprecedented feat. Seriously. You start by losing four games against Vladimir. In the first two you self-destruct in one promising and one decent position, unable to handle either (Dortmund 2011, Meier-Kramnik, 0-1, 32; Kramnik-Meier, 1-0, 49). In Game 3, as Black, you get your king mated on d5 after roughly 30 moves.



Now you are White again, and Vladimir seems to show some pity, going for a Catalan main line in which you could go into a number of safe drawish lines. Still, in the opening you blunder/sacrifice a pawn, are then generously allowed back into the game, just to bravely jump into the abyss again (Dortmund 2013, Meier-Kramnik, 0-1, 38). By now you have convinced Vladimir that you may be able to play chess, but definitely not against him. Also, everything he tried to get you out of your comfort zone worked out marvellously in his favour. He went for structures that you had little to no experience with. You even don't need to prepare anymore, because

'By now you have convinced Vladimir that you may be able to play chess, but definitely not against him.'

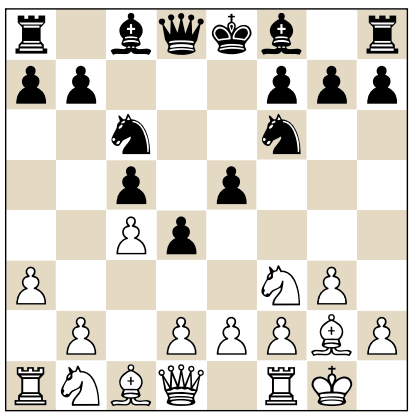
now he is going to spring a surprise at you again... and he always finds something you have not analysed, so don't look at your opening files. The upside: now he thinks he can get away with anything against you! In Game 5, it is time to reap the fruits of all your previous work.
1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.g3 ♘c6 4.♗g2 d5 5.0-0
Because everything I just told you really is the truth, it should come as no surprise that I had never looked at this position!



5...d4
Grabbing space is natural. Earlier, Ivanchuk, Anand and Caruana had done the same against Vladimir, as I found out after the game.
5...e5 is just as sensible.
6.a3
A puzzling move. I do not see how and where the inclusion of a3 and a5 could possibly favour White.
I had only expected 6.e3 e5 7.exd4 exd4 8.d3 ♗e7 9.♗f4 0-0 10.♘e5 ♘xe5 11.♗xe5 and intended 11...♘g4! – otherwise White may take

on f6, establishing a grip on the light squares – 12.♗f4 ♗d6, with equality.

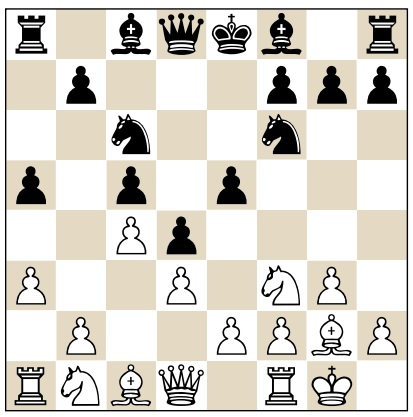
6...e5



7.d3 After 7.b4, 7...cxb4 8.axb4 e4 9.♘g5 ♗xb4 10.♘xe4 ♘xe4 11.♗xe4 ♗h3 12.♖e1 0-0 13.♗a3 a5 would be an appealing follow-up to me: 14.♗xb4 axb4 15.♖xa8 ♕xa8, with plenty of black counterplay down the a-file.

7...a5

7...♗d6 8.b4 I did not want to handle.



8.e4?

White goes for a terrible King's Indian. The queen's knight is devoid of prospects. So bad that a3-a4, followed by ♘a3, was probably necessary to begin damage control and get that knight out of the other pieces' way. This error of judgment from Kramnik is shocking, but his confidence against me had apparently reached heights where the oxygen is beginning to thin...

Still, 8.e3 ♗e7 9.exd4 exd4 10.♗f4 0-0 11.♘e5 was the way to go, but Black is already favoured by the inclusion of a3 and a5: 11...♗d6! 12.♘xc6 bxc6 (White's b-pawn is hopelessly weak here) 13.♗xc6 ♗g4 14.♗f3 ♗xf3 15.♕xf3 ♗xf4 16.♕xf4 ♕b8 17.♘d2 ♕xf4 18.gxf4 ♘h5, and even this leaves Black with the initiative.

8...♗e7 9.♘e1

There is a fundamental problem with White's traditional f-pawn advance: Black's king has not yet castled!

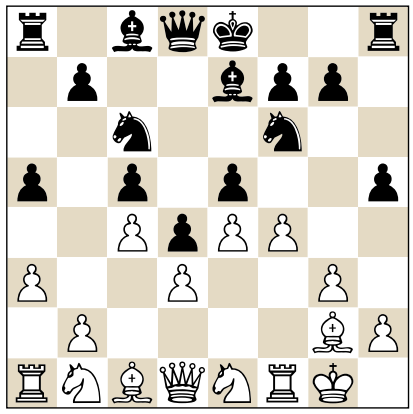
9...h5!

As the f-pawn is poised to advance, ...h5-h4 is going to expose the weakened squares.

10.f4

Played almost instantly, as any other move would signal the acknowledgment of an opening disaster.

10.♗g5 ♘g8 11.♗xe7 ♘gxe7 would leave White facing a prolonged period of positional torture.



NEW IN CHESS

Georg Meier: 'This error of judgment from Kramnik is shocking, but his confidence against me had apparently reached heights where the oxygen is beginning to thin...'

10...h4

Files will open up against the white king, and it is just a matter of time before Black castles queenside and

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– Martin Rieger, Rochade Europa

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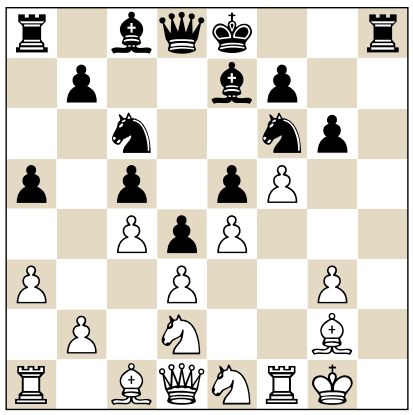
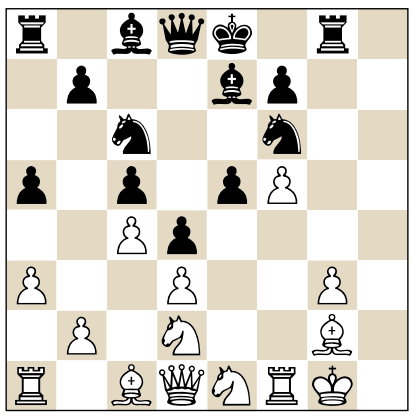
gets all his pieces ready for the final assault on the irreparably weakened white kingside. From here on in, Vladimir simply didn't have the space to do anything meaningful.

11.f5 hxg3 12.hxg3 g6! 13.♘d2



13...gxf5 More precise might have been 13...♖g8 14.♕f3 ♗d7, but after 14.g4 gxf5 15.gxf5 I felt that White would have some chances to survive in practice. The weak g-pawn has gone and Black would have to play more concretely to win.

14.exf5 ♖g8



15.♕f3?

White's only practical chance was 15.♗xc6+! bxc6 16.♔g2, creating some breathing space, but if Black acts with precision, there is still no way to untangle: 16...♖b8 17.♕e2 ♗d6 18.♖b1 (18.♘e4 ♘xe4 19.♕xe4 ♕f6 20.♖f3 ♔d7! 21.g4 ♕h4 22.♖g3 ♖h8 23.♘f3 ♕h1+ 24.♔f2 ♕d1) 18...♖b7! leaves White out of moves, as 19.♘e4 ♘xe4 20.♕xe4 f6, followed by ...♖bg7, is killing.

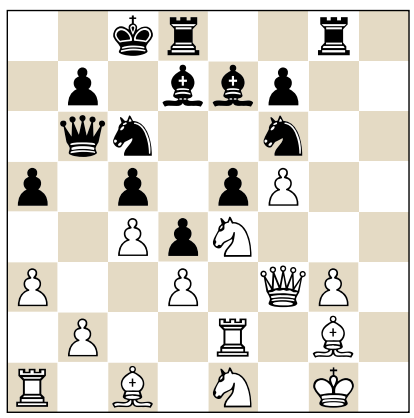
15...♗d7

Now Black just needs to complete his development and the white position will fall apart under the pressure.

16.♖f2 ♕b6

To go exchange hunting with 16...♘g4 17.♘e4 ♘xf2 18.♕xf2 would allow White to participate in the game again with a powerful knight on e4.

17.♖e2 0-0-0 18.♘e4



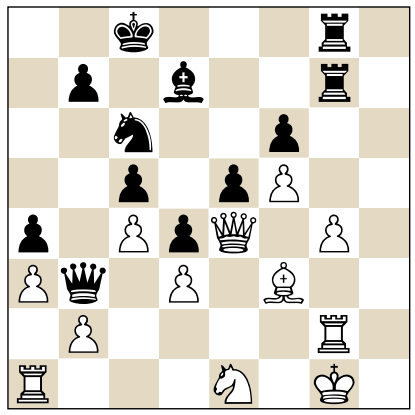
18...♕b3

Not necessary, but underscoring Black's overall superiority felt too good an option to pass up on.

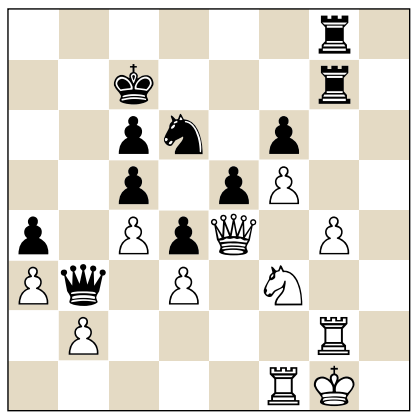
19.♘f2 a4 20.♗h6

20.g4 e4! 21.dxe4 ♕xf3 22.♗xf3 ♘e5 is equally hopeless.

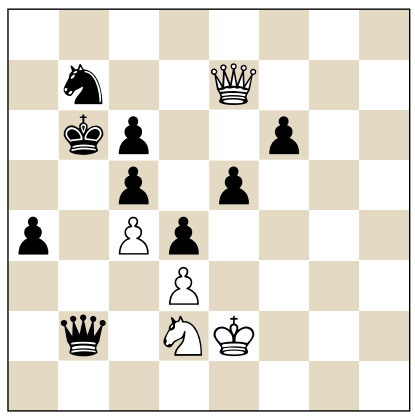
20...♗f8 21.♗xf8 ♖dxf8 22.g4 ♖g7 23.♘e4 ♘xe4 24.♕xe4 ♖fg8 25.♗f3 f6 26.♖g2



26...♘d8! After a series of logical and straightforward moves the regrouping of the knight is the finishing touch. Now I knew that the game was effectively over. **27.♕e2 ♗c6 28.♗xc6 bxc6! 29.♕e4 ♔c7 30.♘f3 ♘f7 31.♖f1 ♘d6**



32.♕e2 ♖xg4 33.♖f2 ♘xf5 34.♘d2 ♖xg2+ 35.♖xg2 ♖xg2+ 36.♔xg2 ♕xb2 37.♔f3 ♘d6 38.♕h2 ♕xa3 39.♔e2 ♕b2 40.♕h7+ ♔b6 41.♕e7 ♘b7



White resigned.

I cannot imagine this game happening without our previous history. Without a doubt Vladimir will do his utmost to set matters straight in our next confrontation. I will be looking forward to it! ■

Dortmund 2014 — **cat. XIX**

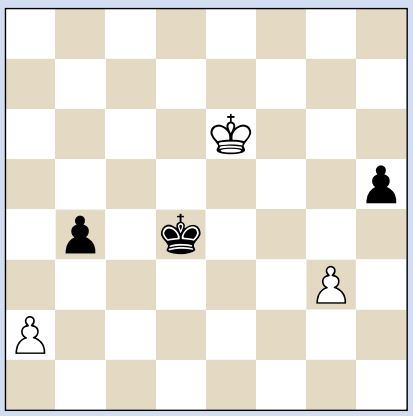
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		TPR
1	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2789	*	½	1	½	1	1	½	1	5½	2934
2	Peter Leko	IGM	HUN	2737	½	*	½	1	½	½	½	½	4	2762
3	Georg Meier	IGM	GER	2632	0	½	*	1	½	½	1	½	4	2777
4	Arkadij Naiditsch	IGM	GER	2705	½	0	0	*	½	1	½	1	3½	2716
5	Michael Adams	IGM	ENG	2743	0	½	½	½	*	½	½	1	3½	2711
6	Ruslan Ponomariov	IGM	UKR	2723	0	½	½	0	½	*	1	½	3	2664
7	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2777	½	½	0	½	½	0	*	½	2½	2604
8	David Baramidze	IGM	GER	2616	0	½	½	0	0	½	½	*	2	2571

Yochanan Afek

Beware: Brilliancy!

Oversights are part of the practice of each and everyone of us. In all six positions below brilliant chances were missed by the fairer sex. Can you improve on their play?

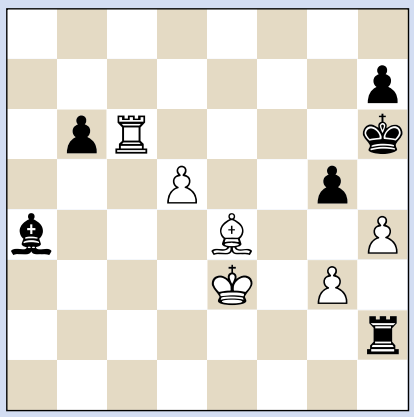
★★☆☆☆



1. White to play

In this seemingly equal pawn ending White chose the standard opposition move **54.♔d6** only to realize, alas a bit too late, that after **54...♔e4 55.♔c5 ♔f3 56.♔xb4 ♔xg3 57.a4 h4** Black was ahead in the race to promote. Was there a safe way to salvation?

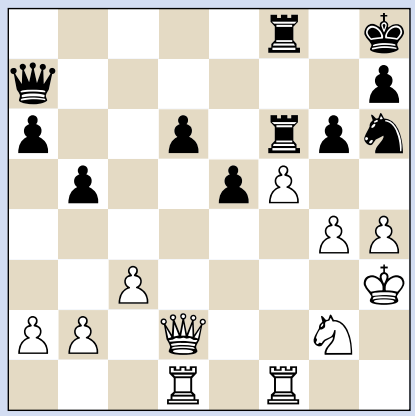
★★★☆☆



2. Black to play

Black spurned the exchange but failed to hold the position after **42...♔g7 43.hxg5 b5 44.♖c7+ ♔f8 45.♗xh7** and soon had to call it a day. Could you make the alternative work?

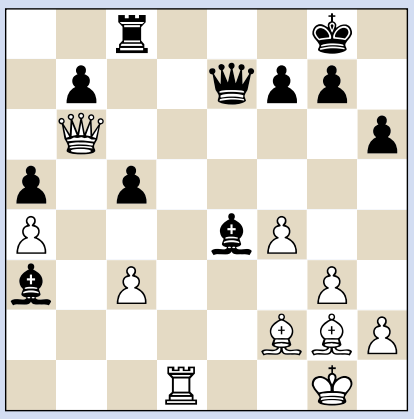
★★★☆☆



3. Black to play

Black chose to sacrifice her attacked knight for a dangerous initiative: **28...♘xg4!? 29.♔xg4 gxf5+ 30.♔h3 f4 31.♖f3 ♖g8 32.♖df1 ♖fg6** but White reached a drawish position with **33.♘xf4 exf4 34.♕xf4 ♕d7+ 35.♕f5** Did Black have a more attractive option?

★★★★☆



4. White to play

White went for the prosaic **27.♗xe4 ♕xe4 28.♕xa5** 28.♕b3 ♕e2! 29.♖a1 ♗b2! 30.♖e1 ♕d2=. **28...c4** and the point was split with no further ado. Do you see a more inspired continuation?

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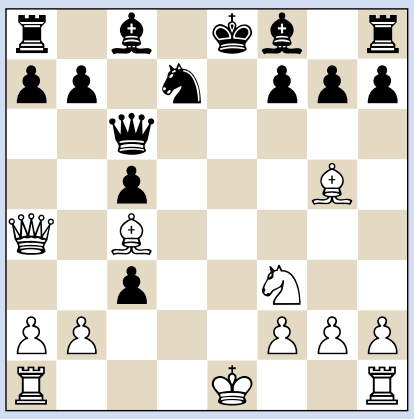
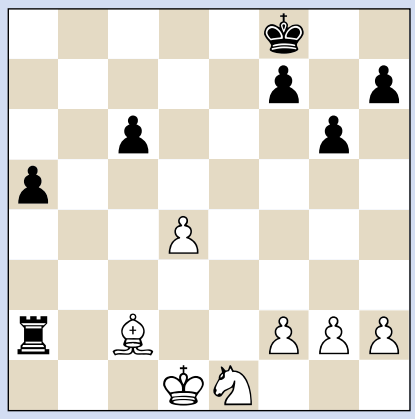


5. White to play

White achieved nothing much by trading queens: **12.♕xc6 bxc6 13.0-0-0 f6 14.♖he1+ ♗e7 15.♗f4 ♘b6?** 15...cxb2+ 16.♔b1 ♔f8=. **16.♗b3?** 16.♗d6! cxb2+ 17.♔b1 ♗f5+ 18.♗d3 ♗xd3+ 19.♖xd3±. **16...c4** and later even lost. What would you play instead?

★★★★★



6. White to play

White played the rather natural **32.♘d3 ♖a1+ 33.♔d2 a4 34.♔c3 a3 35.g3 g5** but following **36.♗b3? h5 37.♘b4 h4 38.♘c2 ♖h1** she failed to stop the passer and soon lost. Do you see how she could have won?

The number of stars roughly indicates their estimated level of difficulty: 1 is easiest and 5 most difficult. Solutions on page 101

He was the top seed and he delivered. For the third time, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave won the top group of the 47th Biel Chess Festival, which was dedicated to the memory of the legendary Hans Suri. The French star only lost one game – against our reporter **Anish Giri** in the second half, but even this slip-up could not stop him. In their first encounter, MVL had prevailed, leaving Giri with the sinking feeling that 'it was going to be just one player's tournament.'

BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

MVL now aka Mr. Biel

Following his wins in 2009 and 2013, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave won the top group of the Biel Chess Festival for the third time.

After skipping last year, I was fortunate enough to be part of the attractive Biel Chess Festival once again. As it is held almost simultaneously with the strong event in Dortmund, the Biel festival always strikes me as the tournament of light, with the big, bright and light Biel Kongresshaus in stark contrast to the dark theatre in Dortmund.

This year the top group, a six-player double round-robin, was dedicated to the memory of Hans Suri, the legendary tournament director who died last summer at the age of 85. There had been some initial financial worries, but thanks to the efforts of the organizational team led by Swiss grandmaster Yannick Pelletier, these were no longer felt once the games got underway. In addition to the closed top group, there were also the traditional open groups topped by the strong Masters Open.

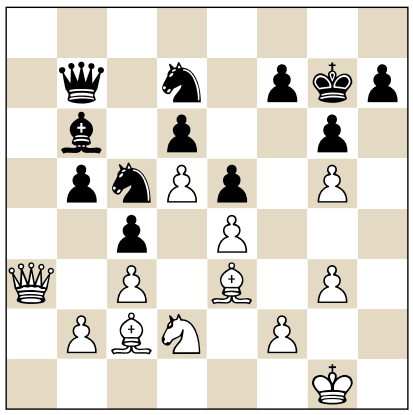
The main contender for first place was Maxime Vachier-Lagrave, the gifted 'French player with two names', as he was famously branded by the inimitable Viktor Kortchnoi. MVL, as he is also known, seems to be enjoying great form lately and his rating has skyrocketed him into the world's top 10. His opponents were Women's World Champion Hou Yifan from China, Radek Wojtaszek from Poland (aka Vishy Anand's second), Pentala Harikrishna from India, Alexander Motylev from Russia (aka European champion and trainer of Russian hope Sergey Karjakin) and yours truly.

The opening ceremony was warm and friendly, and the tournament

schedule was tailor-made for the participating football fans. While enjoying the great weather, we could watch the final matches of the World Cup in Brazil in a relaxed atmosphere on a big TV screen in the centre of Biel.

The early rounds were quiet for most of the players, except for me, as I started by losing my first two games against Hou Yifan and Harikrishna, in both cases with the black pieces. My misery is the subject of another article, so let's just mention that I did something silly in both games, against Hou Yifan in the beginning and against Harikrishna towards the end of the game, although I should also add that both opponents played excellent games (as they did in the second half, when they beat me 1½-½).

In Round 3, I fought back with a win against Wojtaszek. In that same round a new leader emerged when Maxime Vachier-Lagrave won a great game against Hou Yifan with the black pieces.



Hou Yifan-Vachier-Lagrave
Biel 2014 (3)
position after 38...♗b6

With a series of long and deep Spanish-like manoeuvres (the opening was a 3.♗b5+ Sicilian) Maxime has got himself a nice position. White shouldn't be in trouble yet (I think, although I may be too superficial), but things soon got very difficult.

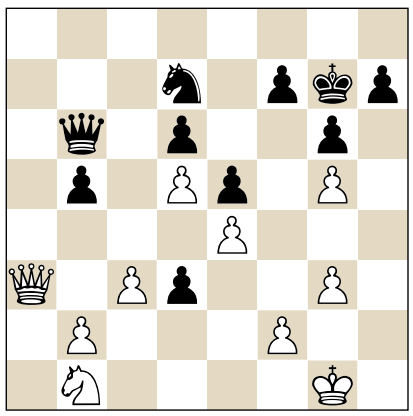
39.♘b1?! Hou already made this waiting move before. To my taste, 39.♔g2 is better. **39...♘d3!?**

Finally, Maxime goes for it.

40.♗xb6 ♕xb6 41.♗xd3 cxd3

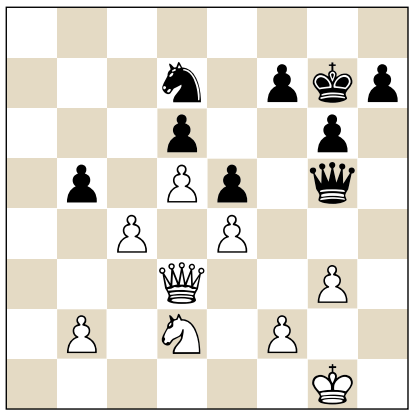
BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

Biel class of 2014: Alexander Motylev, Pentala Harikrishna, Radoslaw Wojtaszek, Anish Giri, Maxime Vachier-Lagrave and Women's World Champion Hou Yifan.



42.♘d2 From an aesthetical point I liked the alternative better. After 42.b4!? White doesn't stand comfortably either, even though a direct black attempt doesn't win: 42...♕d8 43.♕a7! ♕xg5 44.♕xd7 ♕c1+ 45.♔g2 ♕xb1 46.♕xd6, and a perpetual is inevitable. Instead, Black can toy around with ...h6!? or ...f5!? ideas.

42...♕d8! 43.c4 ♕xg5 44.♕xd3

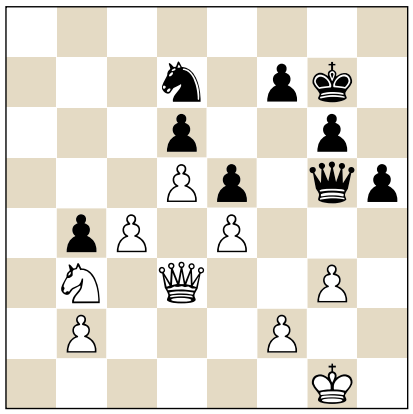


44...b4!

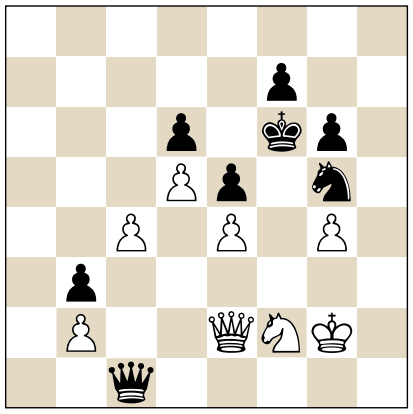
This one is quite impressive. 44...♘c5 looked way more natural, but Maxime correctly decided that it was unnecessary to allow 45.♕c2 b4 46.♘b3! with drawing chances.

45.♘b3 h5!

Playing on both sides. Now it's hard to keep control of the weak kingside structure, while at the same time keeping an eye on the c5-square. The rest of the game was more or less exemplary. White's position slowly but surely falls apart.



46.♔g2 h4 47.♔h3 hxg3 48.fxg3 ♕d8 49.♔g2 ♕a8 50.♕c2 ♕a7 51.♕d2 ♘f6 52.♕e2 ♕a2 53.♘c1 ♕b1 54.♘d3 b3 55.♘f2 ♕c1 56.♔f3 ♘h7 57.♔g2 ♘g5 58.g4 ♔f6



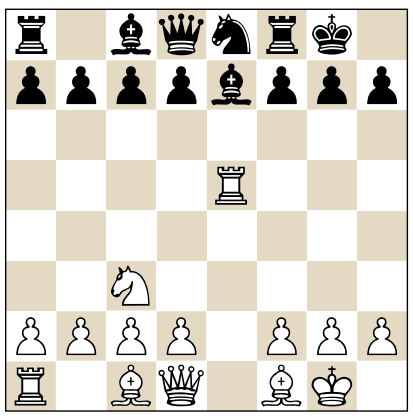
59.♕d3 ♕xb2 60.c5 dxc5 61.d6 ♕d4 62.d7 ♕xd3 63.♘xd3 ♔e7
White resigned.

In Round 4, I won again, against Motylev (not without a lot of luck), but it was Round 5 that made it clear to all of us that this was going to be just one player's tournament.

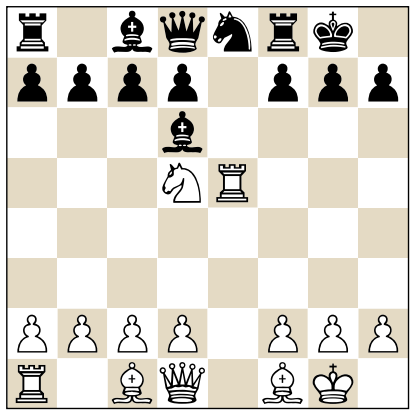
NOTES BY
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave

RL 7.4 – C67
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Anish Giri
Biel 2014 (5)

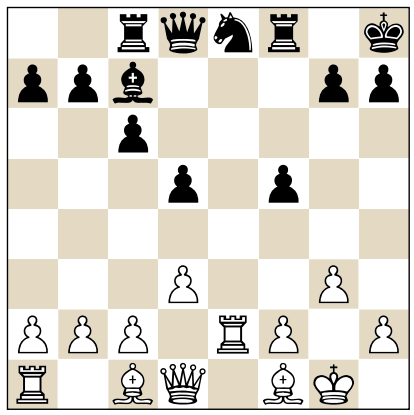
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.♖e1
These days we chess players find it tough to fight the Berlin Wall, and we often have to settle for half an idea, hopefully fresh, to set up some problems for our opponent. I decided this was the right day to try one of those ideas, after having hesitated to use it against Harikrishna in Round 1.
5...♘d6 6.♘xe5 ♗e7 7.♗f1 ♘xe5 8.♖xe5 0-0 9.♘c3 ♘e8



Not the only possible line for Black but one of the most common ones. You'll probably have to wait till my next game with 5.♖e1 to know my ideas against some other moves. Book July 2020 in your calendar!
10.♘d5
A favourite of Ivan Salgado's, who has played no fewer than six games in this line. The obvious motif behind this direct jump is to get the bishop pair. While I was teasing him about the lack of venom in this line, I had no idea I would end up playing it myself one day!
10...♗d6



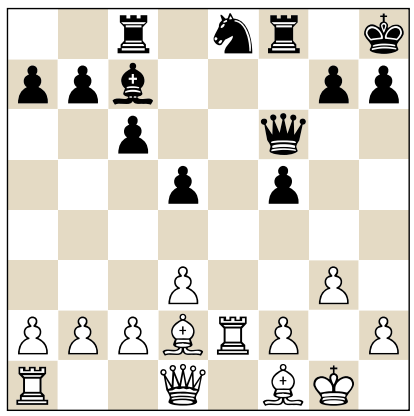
11.♖e2!?
Now is the time to unveil the story behind this awkward rook placement and why I ended up playing this line. I was playing on my iPad with *Play Magnus* and decided to go for the knight jump, as I was doing nothing useful and decided it might be worth to check out something. With the obvious realization that the ♖a1 could only have a future on e1, I thought that 11.♖e1 might just be a waste of time and wanted to check if Black would be able to exploit the dubious placement of ♖e2. And there was I thinking that *Play Magnus* was only good for when you are getting bored of playing ridiculous games on an airplane...
11...c6 12.♘e3 ♗c7
12...♗e7 was the course of the stem game: 13.♘f5 ♗f6 14.♕e1 d5 15.♘e7+ ♗xe7 16.♖xe7 ♘d6 17.♖e2 ♕b6, and from here on in the play of my iPad could probably be improved upon, but fortunately this turned out not to be the case and I was encouraged to pursue my efforts in this direction.
13.♘f5 d5 14.♘e7+ ♔h8 15.♘xc8 ♖xc8 16.d3 f5 17.g3



17...♕f6
Of course, Anish is looking for direct play on the kingside to avoid a lot of suffering. It is a reasonable option, given my lack of development and the immediate opportunity to play ...f4.

> 'I was playing on my iPad with *Play Magnus* and decided it might be worth to check out something.'

18.♗d2
18.c4 f4 19.cxd5 cxd5 20.♗h3 ♖d8 is unclear.



18...♘d6
18...f4 looks reasonable, but White is winning some tempi to keep an edge:

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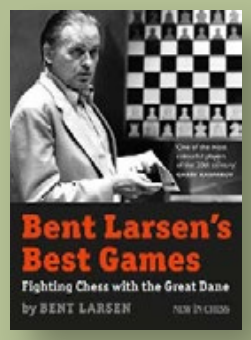

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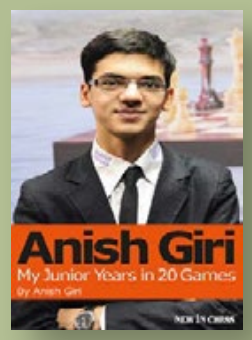

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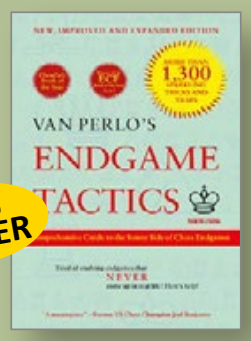

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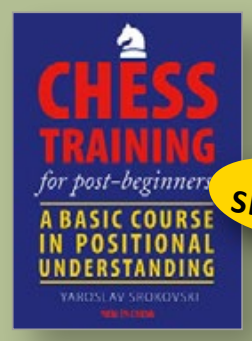

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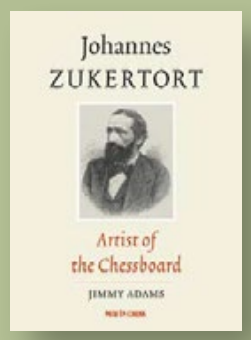

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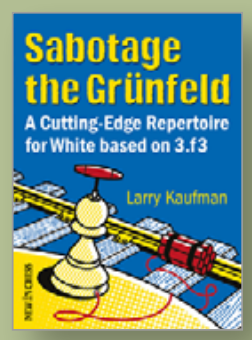

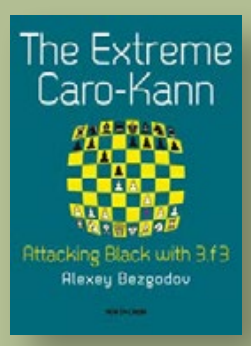

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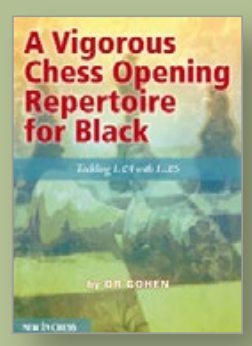

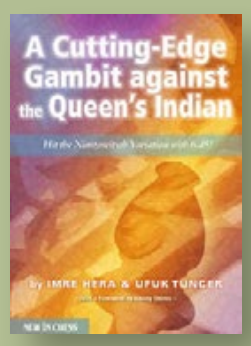

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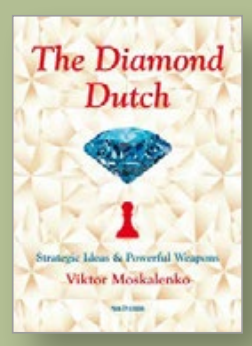

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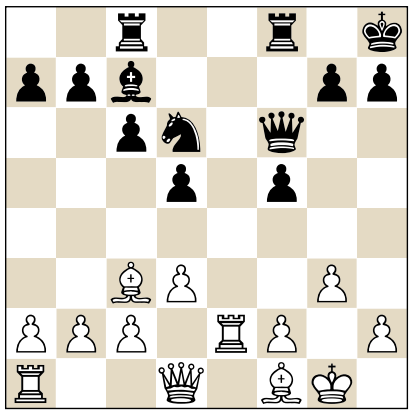
19.♗h3 ♖d8 20.♖e6 ♕f7 21.♔h1! ♗d6 22.♕g4 ♘c7 23.♖ee1, and White keeps a slight edge because his queen on g4 is doing a nice protection job. But he is also lacking prospects to improve his position and the e-file is very well covered.
Bad is 18...♕xb2? 19.♖b1 ♕xa2 20.♗b4, and White easily regains his temporary investment with interest.

19.♗c3

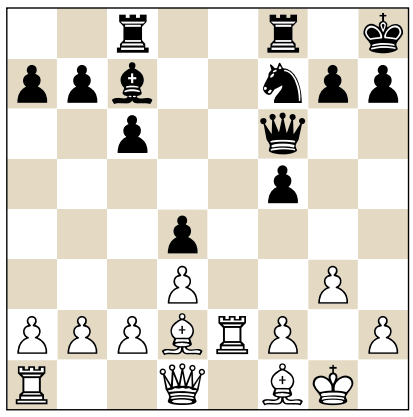


19...d4 Black could play 19...♕f7 to avoid creating a weakness and giving more scope to White's light-squared bishop, but it is not a panacea: 20.♕d2 ♘b5 21.♗e5, and here I am a bit surprised to find myself claiming that this is clearly better for White, as he keeps the outpost on e5 and the knight ends up misplaced. During the game I thought this was only enough to keep a minimal advantage: 21...♖ce8 22.♖ae1 ♔g8 23.c4 ♗xe5 24.♖xe5 ♘d4 25.♕f4 ♘e6 26.♕e3! d4 27.♕d2, with a clear advantage for White.

20.♗d2

During the game I also considered 20.♗b4!? with the idea of provoking ...a5. First of all, I was not at all certain that I would benefit from this supposed weakening, as I was certain I would need to expand on the queenside to improve my position, but more importantly, it seems to fail tactically after 20...♖ce8 21.♖xe8 ♖xe8 22.♕d2 a5!. A nice pawn sacrifice to win some time and catch the bishop: 23.♗xa5 b6 24.♗b4 c5 25.♗a3 ♘b5, and Black should hold this position quite easily due to the lack of weaknesses: 26.♖e1 ♖xe1 27.♕xe1 ♕e5, with equality.

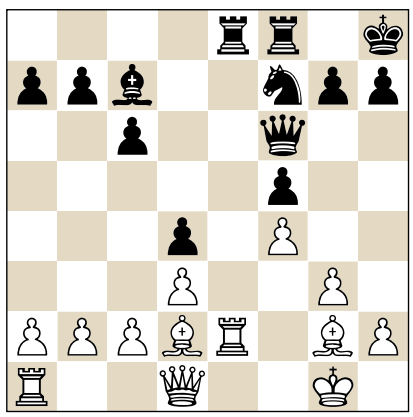
20...♘f7



21.f4!

In general I would have preferred not to close the kingside and take control of the e-file instead with 21.♕e1?! but it was not enough to handle Black's play: 21...f4 22.♗h3 (22.♖e6 ♕f5 23.♕e4 ♕xe4 24.♖xe4 ♘g5 also favours Black) 22...♘g5 23.♗g4 h5! 24.♗xh5? ♕f5, with a decisive attack.

21...♖ce8 22.♗g2

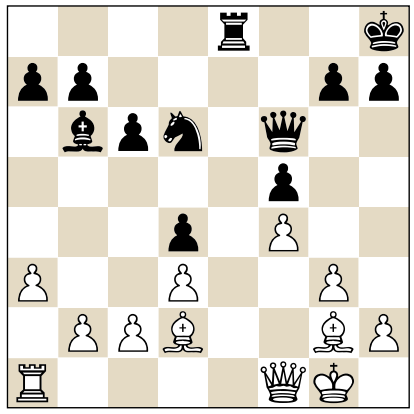


22...♘d6?! A step in the wrong direction. The knight should be heading to d5 if Anish wanted to have a chance to hold comfortably. But I must admit that I had also missed the following strong manoeuvre using the powerful square g8!: 22...♘h6!? 23.h3 ♘g8 24.♕f1 ♕f7 25.a4 ♘f6 26.♖ae1 ♖xe2 27.♖xe2 ♖e8 28.♖xe8+ ♕xe8 29.♕e1 ♔g8 30.♕xe8+ ♘xe8 31.♗e1 ♗d8 32.♗f2 ♗f6 33.♔f1 ♘c7 34.♔e2 ♔f7 35.♔d2 ♘d5, and the position should be a draw.

23.a3

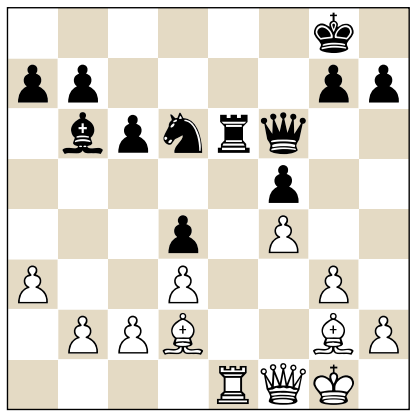
I didn't know yet whether I wanted to put my pawn on a4 or a3 and thought there might be a chance that Black would block the queenside after a4. I was wrong, and 23.♗f3 would also have been a tad more precise.

23...♗b6 24.♖xe8 ♖xe8 25.♕f1



25...♔g8 I was careful to check 25...♘e4? but it's never a concern: 26.dxe4 d3+ 27.♔h1 ♕xb2 28.♕c1, and Black is lost.

26.♖e1 ♖e6

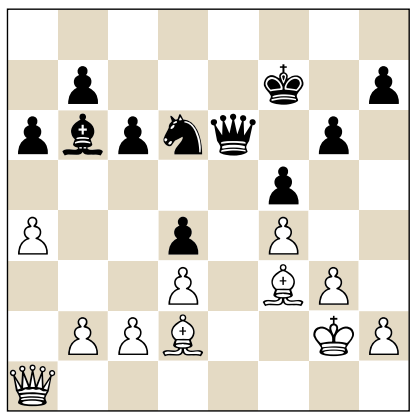


27.a4

After 27.♖e5?! ♖xe5 28.fxe5 ♕xe5 29.♗f4 ♕e6 30.♗xd6 ♕xd6 31.♕xf5 ♗d8! Black is holding comfortably, as there are not enough pieces available to create an attack on Black's slightly weakened king, while the queen will hold the whole queenside.

27...a6 28.♗f3 g6 29.♔g2 ♔f7 30.♖xe6 ♕xe6 31.♕a1

The main idea of a4 was to let my queen come over to the queenside via a3.



31...♗c5?!

Black had to defend actively with

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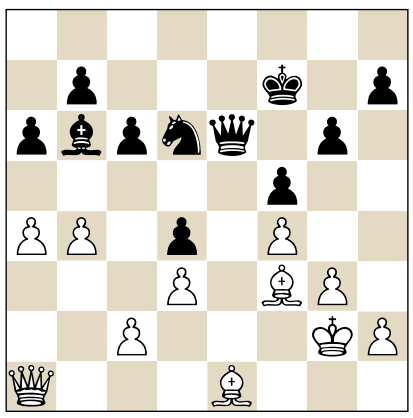
31...♘e8!. True, this move doesn't look active at first sight, but the knight is heading to d5 and will be able to defend the queenside: 32.♕a3 ♘f6 33.c4 (after 33.♕b4 ♘d5 34.♗xd5 cxd5! 35.♔f2 – 35.a5 ♕e2+ 36.♔g1 ♗c5! – 35...♕c6 the position is equal; and the same goes for 33.a5 ♗a7 34.c4 ♘g4 35.♕b4 ♕e7 36.♕xe7+ ♔xe7 37.b4 ♘e3+) 33...dxc3 34.bxc3 ♗a5, and Black gets enough counterplay for the bishop pair now.

32.b4 ♗b6 33.♗e1

Anish had missed this now natural regrouping, taking aim at the pawn on d4, most likely because his X-Ray vision wasn't acute enough to notice that the ♕a1 could actually help attack this pawn. The bad news is that to protect it Black now needs to worsen the coordination of his pieces.

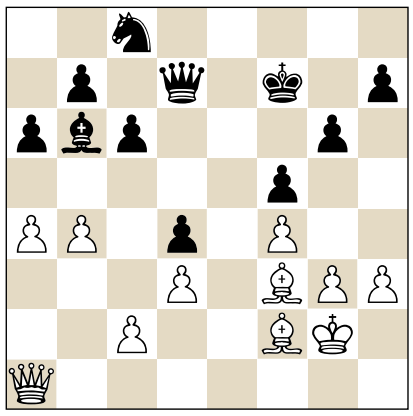


33...♘c8 After 33...♕e3 34.♗f2 ♕d2 35.a5 ♗a7 36.♕a2+! the black queen will be unable to defend the king: 36...♔g7 (36...♔f6 37.♕g8 ♕xc2 38.♕a8 winning) 37.♕e6 ♕xb4 38.♕e7+ ♔g8 39.♗xc6 bxc6 40.♕xa7, and White wins.

34.♗f2 ♕d7 The knight needs to be on c8 to protect the ♗b6 and thus prevent any c4 idea.

35.h3

I figured provoking ...h5 couldn't be a bad thing. Although it is not clear if Black needs to play it now, he probably will at some point to provoke more pawn exchanges once White manages to play g4 under the right conditions.

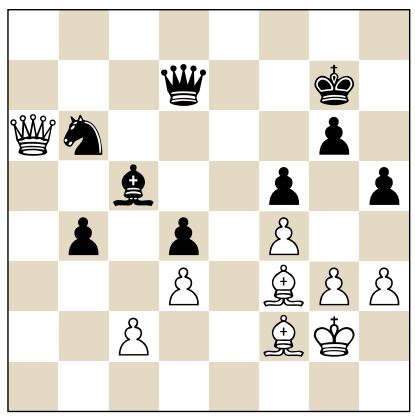


35...h5 36.b5 axb5 37.axb5 cxb5 38.♕a8 ♗c5 39.♗xb7 ♘b6 40.♕a2+ ♔g7 41.♕a6 41.♗f3?! is met by 41...♘a4, and White faces substantially more work to get his queen back to Black's territory.

41...b4 41...♘d5 would be a good try to get counterplay, except there is 42.♗c6 ♕d6 43.♕b7+!

42.♗f3

I don't know whether this position is defensible for Black. It is rather close to a fortress in itself, but his pieces are poorly coordinated, especially the ♘b6. I believe it would be a fairly comfortable draw with this knight on f6, but it is nearly impossible to get it there now.

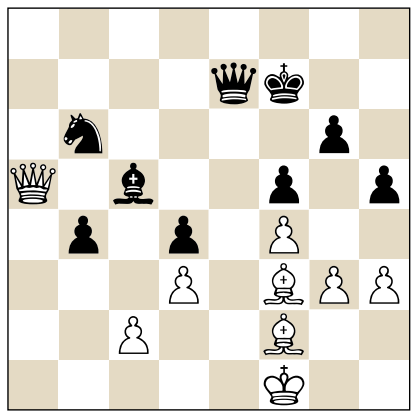


42...♔f8 Another try was 42...♕c7: 43.♕b5 ♔f7 44.♔f1 ♔f8 45.♔e2 ♕e7+ 46.♔d1, and with the king getting to the queenside so easily, things are getting very tough for Black.

42...♘d5? drops a piece to 43.♕c4.

43.♕a5 ♕e7 44.♔f1 ♔f7

Bad is 44...♘d7? 45.♕a8+ ♔g7 46.♕d5, and the pawn drops off.

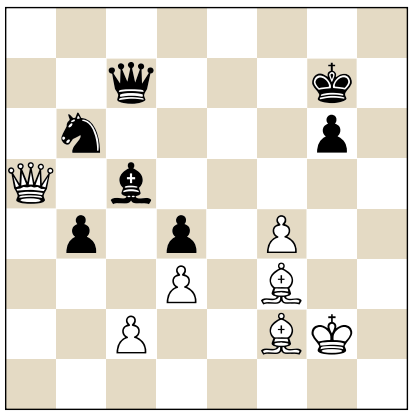


45.♔g2 My primary idea was to get the king to the queenside, but it might not be as easy as it looks: 45.♕a1 ♕d7 46.♔e1 ♘a4! (it is rather difficult to prevent that idea if my king is going to cross the e-file) 47.♔d2 ♘c3 48.♕a6 ♕e6, and with the knight getting to c3 White's chances have thinned considerably.

45...♔f8

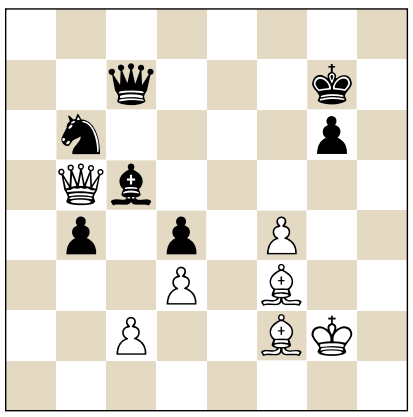
45...♘d7? is bad because of 46.♗xd4.

46.g4 hxg4 47.hxg4 fxg4 48.♗xg4 ♕c7 49.♗f3 ♔g7



50.♕b5

Insufficient is 50.♗g3?! because of 50...♘d5! (50...♗d6 51.♕a1!) 51.♕xc7+ ♘xc7 52.♗c6!. Black is not in time to cover the square e4, but he exchanges enough pawns to make a draw: 52...♘e6 53.♔f3 ♗e7 54.♔e4 b3 55.cxb3 ♘c5+ 56.♔xd4 ♘xb3+ 57.♔d5 ♘c1 58.♔e4 ♗d6!.



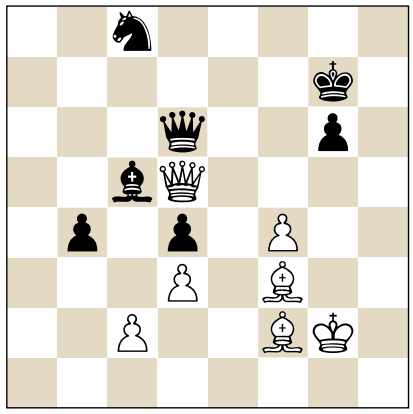
50...♘c8

The best try was 50...♕d6! 51.♗e4 ♘d5 52.♕b7+ ♘e7 53.♔f3, although White keeps good chances.

I would probably have gone for 51.♗g3, walking into a nice drawing variation: 51...♘d5! 52.♕b7+ ♘e7 53.f5 ♕f6 54.♕c7 (54.fxg6 ♗d6!) 54...♕xf5! 55.♗e5+ ♔h7 56.♕xc5 ♕g5+. I might have missed that I cannot prevent perpetual check in this variation, meaning that Black could go for it and allow f5: 57.♔h1 ♕c1+ 58.♔h2 ♕h6+ 59.♔g2 ♕g5+ 60.♔f2 ♕e3+, with a perpetual.

51.♕c4 ♕b6?! Again better was 51...♕d6 52.♗g3 ♘b6 53.♕b5, when 53...♘d5! transposes.

52.♕d5 ♕d6

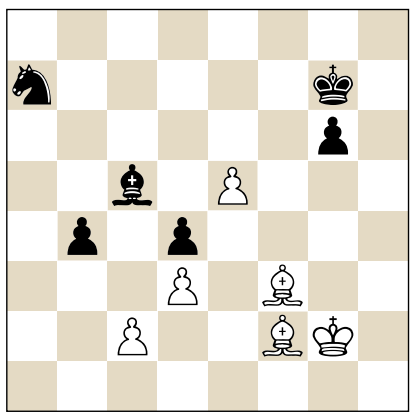


53.♕e5+!

This endgame is won despite the limited number of pawns, thanks to the passed e-pawn.

53...♕xe5 54.fxe5 ♘a7

Or 54...♘e7 55.♔g3! ♘f5+ 56.♔f4 ♘e3 57.♗xe3 dxe3 58.♔e4, and wins.



55.♗d5?

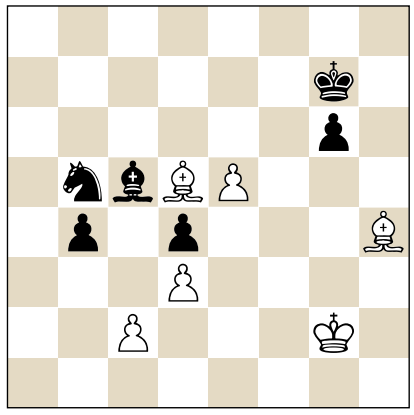
55.♗h4! would have avoided a possible defensive set-up for Black.

55...♘b5?

I think Anish had stopped believing in his chances. To be honest, I also thought my position was winning effortlessly now.

Still, there was 55...g5! 56.♔f3 ♘b5 57.♔g4 ♘c3 58.♗f3 ♔g6, and suddenly I can't find a way through for White! Black is in time to protect his weaknesses: 59.♗e1 (59.♗g1 is not enough to win either: 59...♗a7 60.♗c6 ♗c5 61.♗e8+ ♔h6 62.♔f5 ♘d5 63.♗a4 ♘e3+ 64.♔f6 ♔h5 65.e6 g4 66.♔f7 g3! 67.e7 ♗xe7 68.♔xe7 ♔g4, with a draw) 59...♗f8! 60.♗d2 ♗g7! 61.♗xg5 ♗xe5 62.♗e7, and a draw is the most likely result.

56.♗h4



56...g5

Trying to activate the king, but the passed pawn helped by the two bishops proves too strong. It is essentially over now.

No better was 56...♘c3 57.♗f6+ ♔f8 58.♗b3 ♗e7 59.♔f3! ♗xf6 60.exf6, and White will collect all the pawns one by one.

57.♗xg5 ♔g6 58.♗d8 ♔f5 59.e6 ♘a3 60.♗b3 ♘xc2 61.♗xc2 ♔xe6

Black resigned.

I was fairly happy with my play in this game, especially as in this kind of positions with a small edge I was accustomed to slowly improving my position, only to botch everything up with one unfortunate move. It actually did happen in this game as well, but luckily it went unnoticed by both of us. It was also pleasant to find a couple of nice ideas to keep relentless pressure on Black's position.

'I was accustomed to slowly improving my position, only to botch everything up with one unfortunate move.'

■ ■ ■

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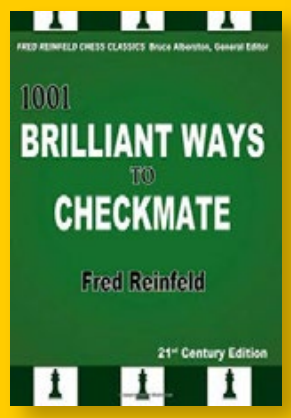

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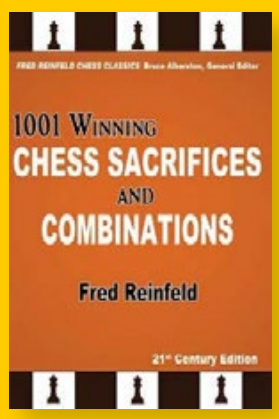

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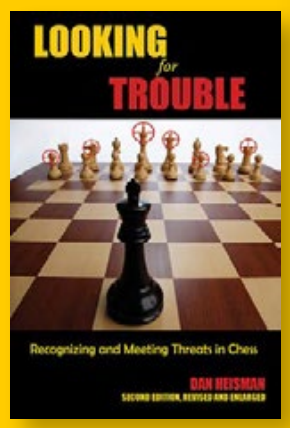

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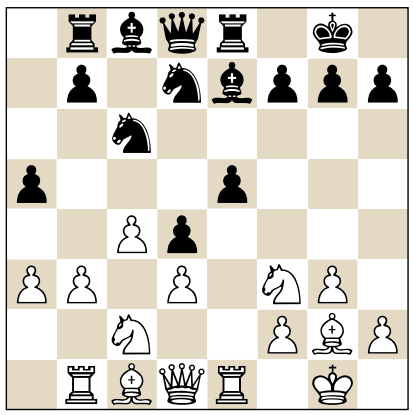
While Maxime got to +2, his closest rivals seemed to be dozing. Hou Yifan was doing well, always hovering around the 50 per cent mark, while Wojtaszek and Harikrishna had ups and downs but also moved around that 50 per cent equator. Alexander Motylev was not feeling at home here from the very first round, when he lost to Wojtaszek. He never recovered until the very end.

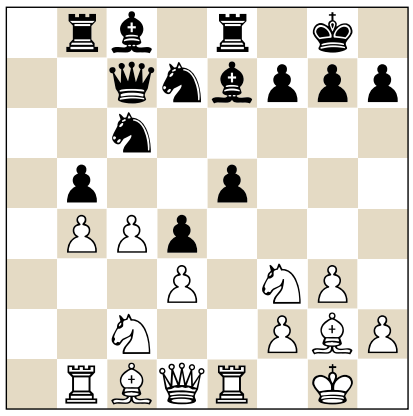
Hou Yifan played her most spectacular game in Round 7, against Wojtaszek. It wasn't one of her wins, but it should have been.

RE 14.2 – A09
Hou Yifan
Radoslav Wojtaszek
Biel 2014 (7)

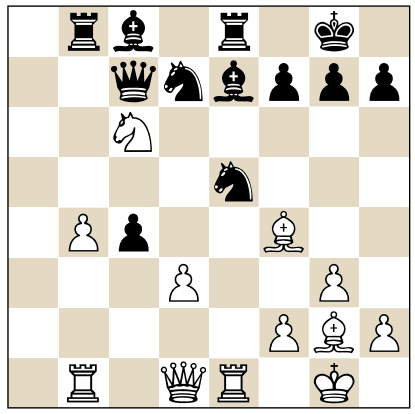
1.♘f3 d5 2.g3 c5 3.c4 d4 4.e3 ♘c6 5.exd4 cxd4 6.♗g2 e5 7.0-0 ♘f6 8.d3 ♘d7 9.♘a3 ♗e7 10.♘c2 0-0 11.♖b1 a5 12.b3 ♖b8 13.♖e1 ♖e8 14.a3



14...♕c7?! The thematic and natural move, planning to meet b4 with the automatic ...axb4, axb4 b5, but in this particular position there is a flaw...
15.b4 axb4 16.axb4 b5

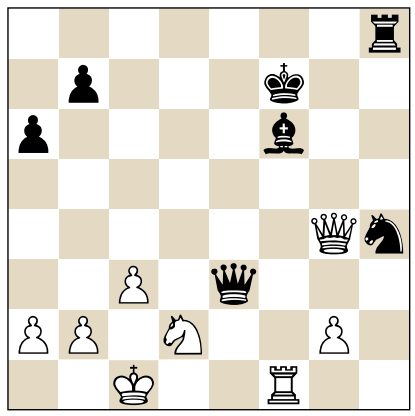


17.♘fxd4! The fact that White is playing a Benoni with an extra tempo suddenly starts telling.
17...exd4 18.♗f4 ♘ce5 19.♘xd4 bxc4 20.♘c6



And with everything pinned, Wojtaszek was bound to end up material down, and it was only thanks to very tough resistance, but mostly a lot of luck, that he managed to escape from the mighty Chinese girl.

The key game, the pinnacle, if you wish, of Maxime's excellence and Alexander's downfall, was the clash Motylev-Vachier-Lagrave, 0-1, played in the same round. In a mere two moves Alexander lost control of a well-played game and could no longer find any compensation for his excellent piece sacrifice.



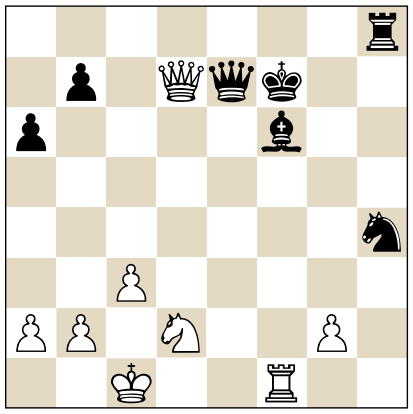
Motylev-Vachier-Lagrave
Biel 2014 (7)
position after 27...♗f6

The position is wild, but with two pawns for the sacrificed piece and the pin along the f-file White shouldn't complain. Yet, things started going very wrong here for the Russian player.

28.♕d7+?!

28.♕e4! was best, when it's Black who escapes: 28...♕b6 (28...♕xe4 29.♘xe4 ♖h6 30.g3! is bad news for the knight) 29.♕d3! (creating a bunch of threats) 29...♔g7! 30.♕d7+ ♔h6 31.g3 ♖h7! (31...♖d8 32.♕f7 ♗g5 33.gxh4 ♗xd2+ 34.♔c2! is good for White, the king on h6 is helpless) 32.♕h3 ♗g5 33.gxh4 ♗xd2+ 34.♔xd2 ♕xb2+ 35.♔d3, and after 35...♖e7! the position is equal, as both kings are too exposed not to fall victim to perpetual check.

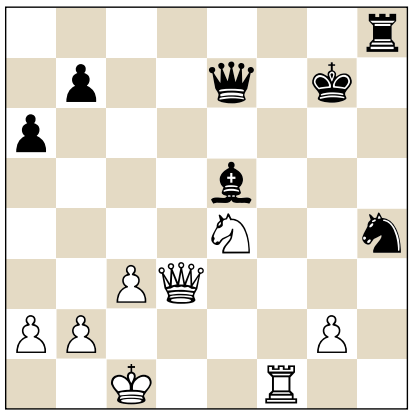
28...♕e7



29.♕d3? This one is simply bad; now the king escapes.

29.♕g4! was a must, cutting off the retreat for the king: 29...♕e6 30.♕e4!, eyeing the b7-pawn and planning to meet 30...b5? with 31.g4!! and keep the position balanced.

29...♔g7! 30.♘e4 ♗e5



Black is in complete control and went on to win the game easily.

While things were going way too well for Maxime, it was my turn to test the leader's fate for the second time, now with the white pieces.

NOTES BY
Anish Giri

KI 81.2 – E60
Anish Giri
Maxime Vachier-Lagrave
Biel 2014 (9)

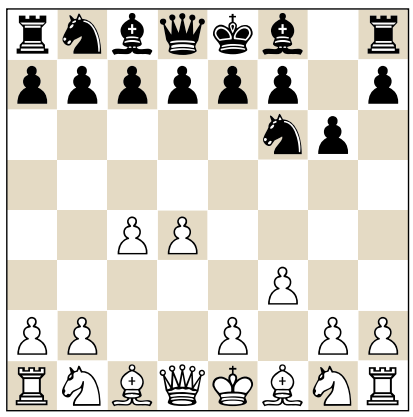
I had been looking forward to this game from the very beginning of the tournament. Unfortunately, I didn't manage to meet Maxime with the white pieces in the desired tournament situation. Before this game I was two full points behind, spoiling my original taking-over-the-world plan. Nevertheless, I had a whole lot to play for, and finding the motivation was not a problem.

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6

Oh no, not the Grünfeld... is what I would normally think. For this game, however, I had an idea in mind.

3.f3

This is usually an awkward move, but if your opponent keeps playing an even more awkward one after yours, then why not.



3...e6

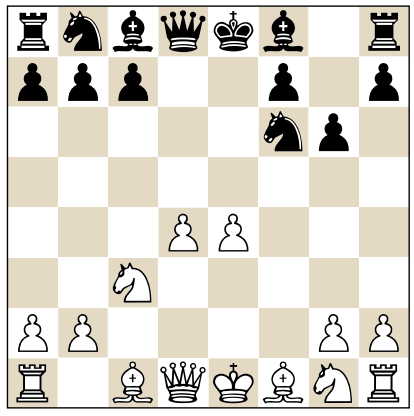
A brilliant invention of Maxime's that is a whole lot better than it looks. In fact, I tried to wax enthusiastic about it during a training camp one lazy afternoon, but my cool-headed trainer back then told me to buzz off and continue analysing 3...d5.

3...d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 doesn't look all that stupid for White, considering that there is a variation of the Grünfeld which goes 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♘a4!?. This position inspires me to think of a Soviet story of a drunk grandmaster habitually playing 5...♘c3?? here, but unfortunately this story doesn't exist.

4.e4 d5 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♘c3

I figured that if there is a refutation of 3...e6, it must be something in which the dark-squared bishop goes to b4 and not to g7, where it truly belongs after 2...g6.

6...dxe4 7.fxe4

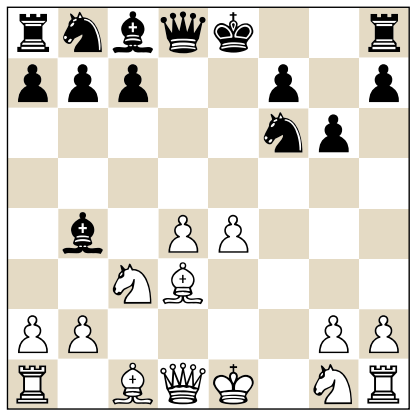


7...♗b4

7...♗g7 simply won't work: 8.e5 ♘fd7 9.♘f3 0-0 10.♗c4 c5 11.♗g5 ♕a5 12.♗xf7+! ♖xf7 (12...♔h8 13.e6 cxd4 14.e7!) 13.e6 ♖f6 14.d5! is the most spectacular way to punish it.

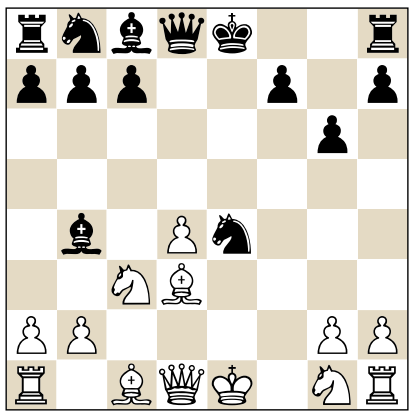
8.♗d3!

This move is too natural to deserve an exclamation mark, but it does appear to be a novelty. In the past, most people, on the authority of Houdini and nothing else, went for 8.♗g5, giving up the dark-squared bishop, which is a sin in a pawn structure like this. 8...h6 9.♗xf6 ♕xf6 10.♘f3 ♗g4 11.♗b5+ c6 12.♗e2 ♘d7 13.0-0 ♕e7 resulted in 0-2 in the match Rest of the World vs. Vachier-Lagrave (The Rest of the World was represented by Svidler in the Alekhine Memorial and Flear in Gibraltar).



8...♘xe4!?

The most critical option. This risky decision took Maxime over 40 minutes, which was something of a surprise to me. Having played the position after 7...♗b4 twice already, I had expected Maxime to have somewhat in mind against 8.♗d3. Alternatives are 8...0-0 and 8...c5, which I studied in depth long before this encounter. In the end I came to the conclusion that all three moves are equally good (or bad...), so the 40 minutes that Maxime spent on this move may be considered a waste of time.



9.♕e2!

This strong move came as a surprise to my opponent, but having analysed the alternatives I had come to the conclusion that this is the strongest choice.

9.♘e2 is the computer suggestion and the most natural move, too, but surprisingly enough, Black seems to be holding his own here.

9...0-0!

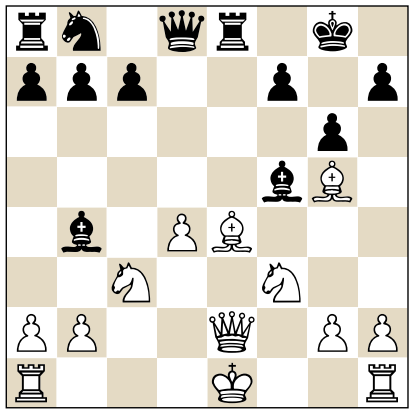
The best. Black temporarily gives up a piece and stays on his feet in the fight for the initiative.

9...f5?! is the reason why the machine has trouble appreciating 9.♕e2, but after the natural 10.♘f3! 0-0 11.0-0 ♘xc3 12.bxc3 ♗xc3 13.♖b1 it becomes apparent (even to the greedy machine) that White is going to launch a deadly attack soon. Once again, the dark-squared bishop is really missed on g7 here.

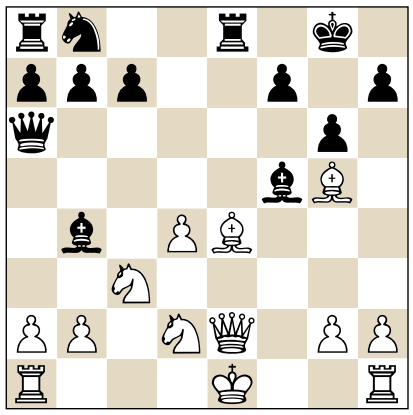
10.♗xe4 ♖e8 11.♘f3 ♗f5

Black wins back the piece, but the complications are only starting.

12.♗g5



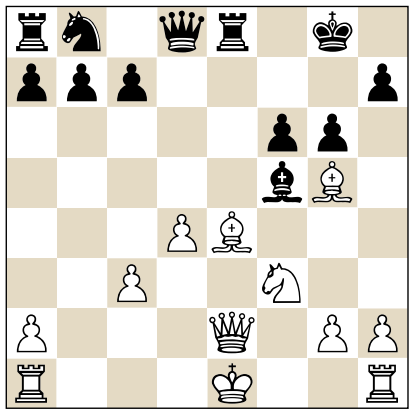
12...♗xc3+ Unfortunately, the creative idea of 12...♕d6!? was too hard to spot, and so my hopes of shocking Maxime with 14.♖b1!! were nonexistent. 13.♘d2 ♕a6! is a brilliant way to win back the piece, but here comes the real brilliancy:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

14.♖b1!!. One of the most spectacular prophylactic moves I have ever seen. Now, after 14...♗xc3 15.bxc3 ♕xe2+ 16.♔xe2 ♗xe4 17.♘xe4 ♖xe4+ 18.♔f3 ♖e6 the modest rook on b1 has its say: 19.♖xb7! ♖c6 20.♖c1, with a very sad endgame for Black. The c7-pawn is going to fall, as c4-d5 is coming.

13.bxc3 f6



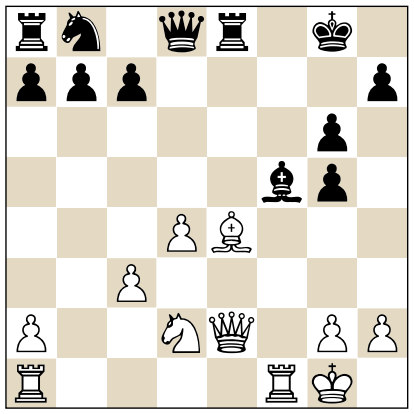
14.♘d2! The only way to grab the advantage. Obviously, at this point of the game I was merely the executor, with the engine being the mastermind.

14.♗d5+ is tempting, but after 14...♔g7 15.♘e5 ♕xd5 16.♗xf6+ ♔g8! (16...♔xf6? would lose nicely: 17.♘g4+! ♔f7 18.♕xe8+) there is no way for White to gain anything.

14.♗xf6 also looks clever, but here, too, Black is doing alright: 14...♕xf6 15.♗d5+ ♔f8 16.♕xe8+ ♔xe8 17.♗xb7, and now the strong 17...a5! 18.♗xa8 ♕a6! 19.♗d5 ♘d7, with counterplay, thanks to the bad coordination of the white pieces. Had he castled already he would be completely winning, but the king on e1 is really a pain in the neck.

14...fxg5 15.0-0

Surprisingly, at least to me, this position is a lot better for White. Here I felt the need to look more deeply, but the machine was screaming a serious advantage and so I didn't spend much time convincing myself. White is a pawn down, but Black has a very vulnerable king and his pieces lack space and good squares.



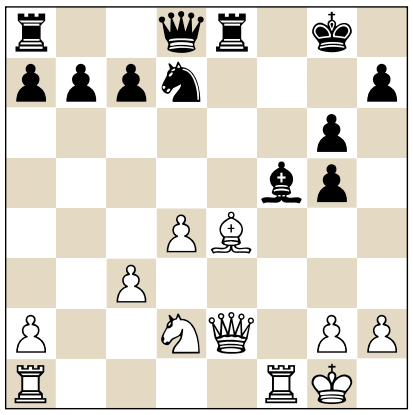
15...♘d7!?

This move signalled the end of my preparation. I knew White had a serious advantage, but over the board that didn't seem so obvious.

15...♘c6 was the move I had a look at, when White creates some trouble for Black with the creative 16.♕c4+!. (16.♕d3 ♘e7!) 16...♗e6 17.♕d3!. Now the threat is ♗xg6, but more importantly, Black has no way to do anything against the slow but effective assault starting with ♖ae1, ♘f3, etc. Now 17...♔g7 is met strongly by 18.d5! ♘e5 19.♕d4.

BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

Together with his girlfriend Sopiko Guramishvili and organizer Peter Bohnenblust, Anish Giri listens to a speech at the opening ceremony. The Dutchman had his revenge in the second game against MVL, but it was not enough to repair the damage done in the first two rounds.



16.♕c4+?!

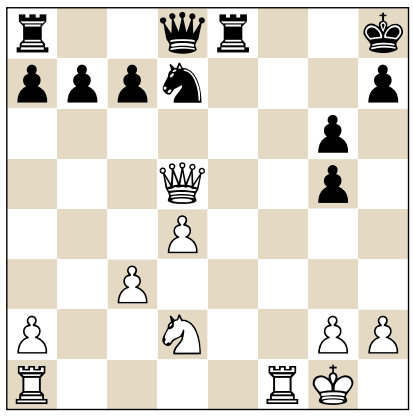
I took some time here trying to figure out how to proceed. The lack of a pawn was not a problem, as it was easy to win it back, but the advantage seemed to be slipping away in all lines. The move here was 16.♕d3!!. I was genuinely surprised to see the evaluation of the computer, but after toying with the position a bit, I understood that an imaginary game Houdini-Giri 1-0 would probably end before move 30: 16...♗xe4 17.♘xe4. Why is White so much better? I don't know. What should Black play? I don't know. For instance, 17...♔g7 18.♖ae1 h6 (a reasonable attempt to make some useful moves, but it leads to a disaster) 19.♕c4 ♖e7 20.d5! followed by ♕d4+ and an eventual breakthrough, either with d6, or by doubling the rooks on one of the open files. An impressive lesson by the computer.

16...♗e6 17.♗d5

This seemed very tempting.

17...♗xd5 18.♕xd5+ ♔h8

Here I took a lot of time trying to find the most efficient way of exploiting my superior pieces. Capturing the b7-pawn wasn't on the top of my list, ♖f7 allowed Black to escape into an endgame and so I chose the move in the game, which keeps the tension.

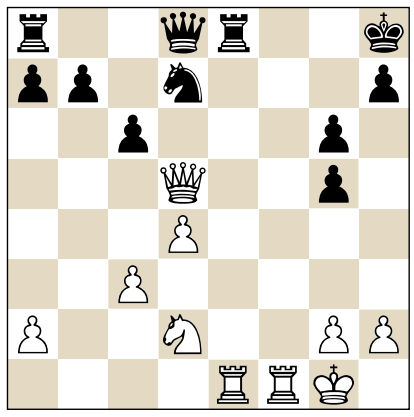


19.♖ae1!?

19.♖f7!? was maybe a better shot, and after 19...♘e5!? (this is the most natural, though other moves are possible too: 19...♖e7 20.♖af1 with pleasant pressure – the king on h8 will soon get nervous) 20.♕xd8 ♖axd8 21.♖xc7 ♖d7 (21...♘d3!?) 22.♖xd7 ♘xd7 23.♔f1 the position is obviously slightly better for White, with ♖e1 coming, but first of all I was hoping for something more and secondly I was slightly concerned about 21...♘d3 followed by a rook invasion. Nevertheless, this was a solid option of getting at least some advantage out of my opening preparation.

19...c6

Once again White faces a dilemma.



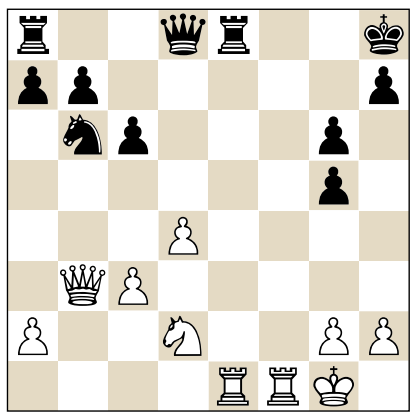
20.♕b3

20.♕f7!? ♖f8 21.♕e6 ♖e8 22.♕xe8+ ♕xe8 23.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24.♖f7 would lead to a slightly better endgame, once again, but by this point I still was hoping for something more fun.

20.♖xe8+ gives White nothing substantial after 20...♕xe8 21.♕xg5 ♕e6! and 20.♕d6 ♘b6 is also not much.

20...♘b6

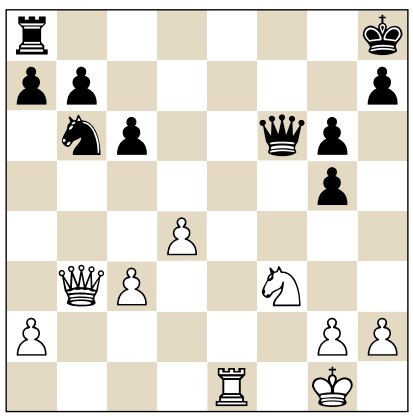
This one surprised me somewhat. I should have finally abandoned my hopes of a kingside initiative right here and cashed the remainder of my chips, but then again, there is a reason why the casino always wins.



21.♘f3?! The second inaccuracy, which cost me the remainder of my advantage. 21.♕f7! was best, when after 21...♕d7 22.♕xd7 ♘xd7 23.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 24.♖f7 we reach the same endgame as after 20.♕f7!?.

21...♖xe1 I expected 21...♕d5!?, when after 22.♕b4 I failed to find any way to continue after 22...♔g8 23.♘e5 c5! and so while I couldn't find anything here, I saw Maxime's hand rising above the e8-rook and I immediately understood what he was about to play.

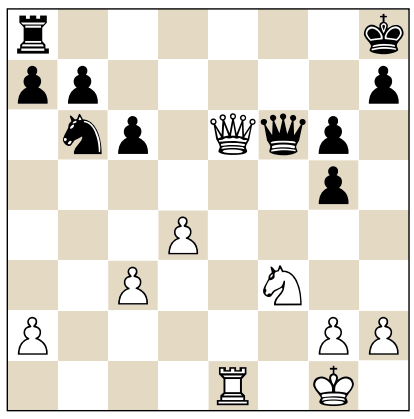
22.♖xe1 ♕f6!



This move had escaped my attention and once I saw it, I got extremely frustrated and with a long swing of my hand played the bold:

23.♕e6!

I practically considered it a draw offer of some sort, but suddenly Maxime started getting nervous.



23...♕xe6

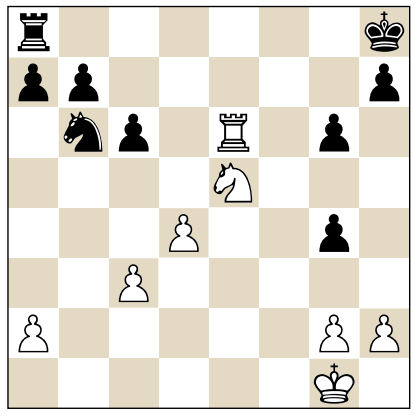
Maybe there was something even simpler, but with an excellent pawn structure and, for now, an extra pawn, Black is very safe.

23...♖f8!? looks easier indeed: 24.♕xf6+ ♖xf6 25.♘xg5 h6 26.♘f3 ♔g7 and since Black has taken care of the 7th rank, the game is basically over, it's just a draw.

24.♖xe6 g4

24...♖d8 was also a draw. Once again the easiest way is to solve the 7th rank issue: 25.♘e5 (otherwise ♖d7 will be there) 25...♔g8 26.♖e7 ♘d5 27.♖xb7 ♘xc3 28.♘xc6 ♖d6 and there is too little material, the position is just equal.

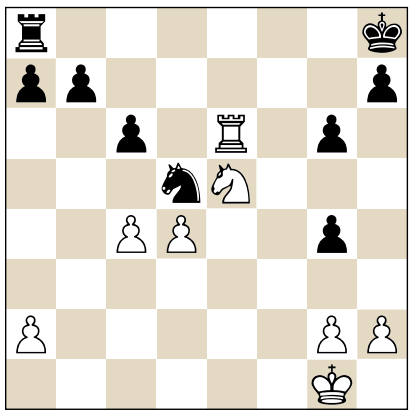
25.♘e5



25...♘d5? Here I got confused, but when I looked at the clock and at my opponent, I understood he had started drifting.

25...♖f8! was the way to play, cutting off the f-file for the white king: 26.♘xg4 ♔g7 27.♘e5 ♘c8, with very solid equality once again.

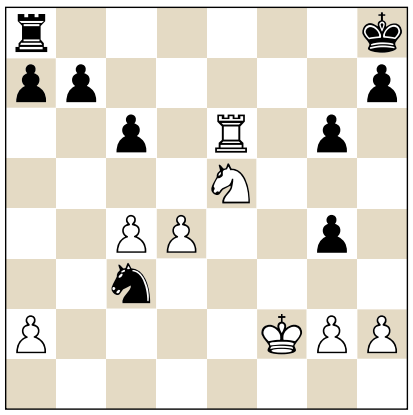
26.c4



26...♘f4?

Now I sensed that both my rook and my king would get activated and I got quite seriously optimistic once again.

26...♘c3! was still the better choice. The knight move is somewhat vague and confusing, but it was better for Maxime to have us both confused by this point: 27.♔f2!?. The best shot, activating the king (27.♖e7 ♖f8!; 27.♘xg4 ♖f8!?), and now:



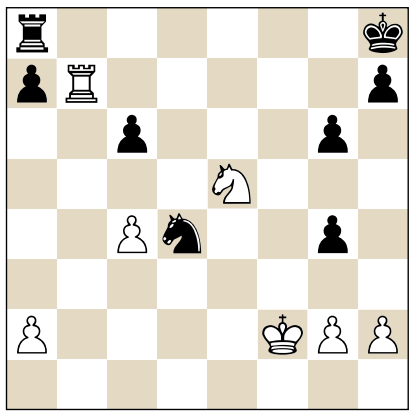
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

– 27...a5! (creating counterplay while keeping the knight closer to the action) 28.a3 (after 28.♖e7, 28...b5! is strong. One of the many ideas of this great move is revealed after 29.♘d7? ♖a7!) 28...a4! and this holds according to the machine, though Black is really walking a thin line.

– 27...♘xa2 seems dangerous, but after 28.♖e7 there are some mating nets in the air, plus the d-pawn is an asset: 28...a5 (28...b5 29.♘d7!) 29.♖xb7 (29.♘d7 ♔g8!) 29...a4 30.♘xg4 ♖f8+ (preventing ♘f6) 31.♔e3 a3, and now the machine starts a series of very strong non-human moves: 32.♖b1!? ♖a8 33.♔d3 ♘b4+! 34.♔c3!, and claims that the a-pawn is going to be lost soon.

27.♖e7 ♘e2+ 28.♔f2 ♘xd4 29.♖xb7

All of White's pieces are at excellent positions, making Maxime's task quite difficult, not even to mention the approaching time-trouble.



29...a5 We both thought this was a serious mistake, but in fact other options seem quite bad too.

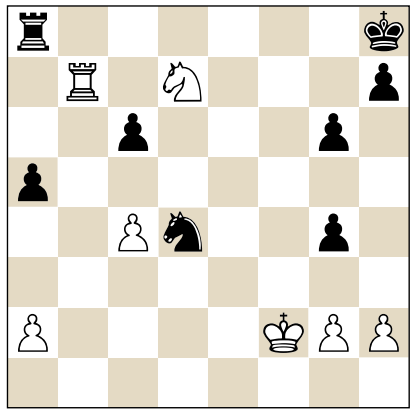
29...♖f8+ creates some counterplay, but with the king in the corner it is not enough to secure equality: 30.♔e3 ♘c2+ 31.♔e4 ♖f2 32.♘xg4! ♖xg2 33.♘f6! ♖xh2 34.♔e5! with the idea to get the king to f7, when White is just coming to mate the black king and there is nothing he can really do about it. I was really hoping for something like that to happen.

29...♖e8 looks active, but loses two pawns for no compensation: 30.♘xg4 ♖e2+ 31.♔f1 ♖e6 32.♖xa7.

30.♘d7!?

At first I thought this would win on the spot, but in fact it's not that simple. Nevertheless, I couldn't resist.

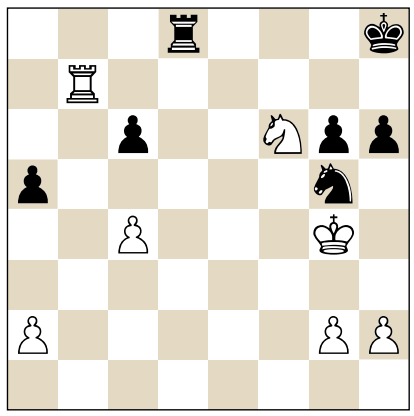
30.♘xg4 was simpler: 30...♖f8+ 31.♔e3 ♘f5+ 32.♔d3, with a serious advantage. Black is likely to lose one of his queenside pawns and once again his problem is the king in the corner.



30...♘e6! Bringing the knight to g5 is the only way to prevent mate comfortably. **31.♔g3 ♖d8 32.♘f6 ♘g5** Otherwise ♖f7 would leave Black paralysed.

32...♘f8!? was possible, with the idea to just leave the knight hanging after 33.♖f7 with something like 33...♖d4!?. Now White shouldn't take the knight just yet. Maxime saw this defensive possibility, but didn't fully trust it and neither do I.

33.♔xg4 h6



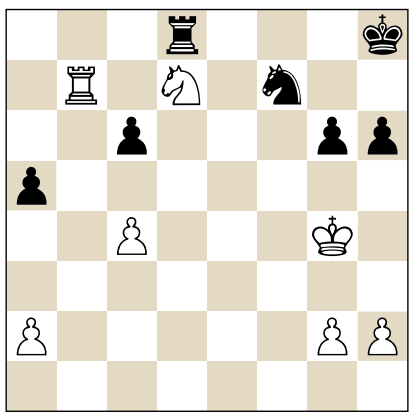
34.♘d7!

> 'While I couldn't find anything here, I saw Maxime's hand rising above the e8-rook and I immediately understood what he was about to play.'

I very much wanted to keep the king cornered, but after a serious think I came to the conclusion that I should let it off the hook (literally) for a while. More importantly, the rook is kept passive.

34.♔f4 looked very strong to me at first, but then I noticed a strong reply: 34...♖d1! (34...♖d2? loses to 35.♔e3! ♖xg2 36.h4; 34...♖d4+ 35.♔e5 ♖xc4 36.g4!) and now the threat is ♖f1+ and Black kicks the knight from f6 anyway: 35.♔e5 ♖e1+ 36.♔d4 ♖e6!.

34...♘f7



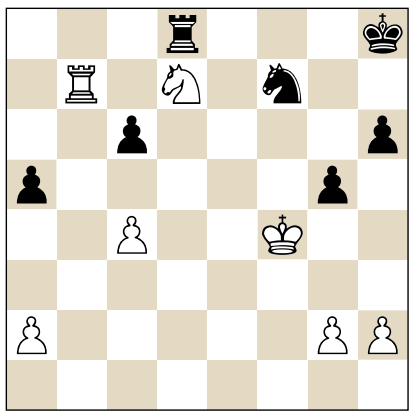
35.♔f4 Too natural not to be played, but maybe not the ideal decision.

35.♔g3! might be more precise from the machine's point of view, when after 35...♘d6 36.♖c7 the threat of ♘f6 doesn't give Black any freedom and as a bonus there is a double attack on the agenda with ♘e5.

35.♖b8!? might be the strongest mathematically, when White gets an endgame similar to that in the game, but a clearly worse version. Nevertheless this version is probably good enough for the position to be winning: 35...♔g7 36.♖xd8 ♘xd8 37.♔f4 ♔f7 38.♔e5 ♔e7 39.♘c5 ♘f7+ 40.♔d4 – I assessed this knight endgame as drawish, but the machine points out that Black can't save his queenside pawns. Somehow White is dominating: 40...♘d6 41.♘d3 followed by ♔c5.

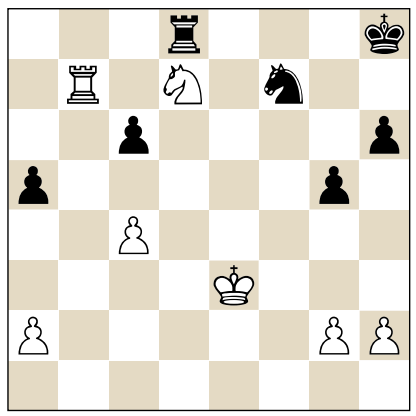
35...g5+!

This one I had somewhat underestimated. Now I have to be careful not to fall into a fork.



36.♔e3

36.♔g3!? was another option, but I saw the idea of a transition into the knight endgame and so I wanted to keep my king more central: 36...♘d6 (36...♔g8 37.c5!) 37.♖c7. Now the following line is not forced, but quite instructive: 37...♔g8! 38.c5 ♘e8 39.♖a7 ♔f7!? 40.♘e5+ ♔e6 41.♘xc6 ♖d3+ 42.♔f2 ♖d2+ 43.♔f3 ♖xa2 44.♖xa5 ♖xa5 45.♘xa5, when White is most likely winning, at least if you believe Botvinnik, who said that all knight endgames are like pawn endgames. It's not so easy though after 45...♘f6!.



36...♘d6? The losing move. Maxime probably underestimated the transition into the knight endgame.

36...♖e8+! had to be played, when after 37.♔d3 (37.♔d4 ♖e2) 37...♖e1 38.♘b8 Black is very much on the defensive, but he has very decent drawing chances with his rook and knight getting activated and the possibility of snatching some pawn.

37.♖b8!

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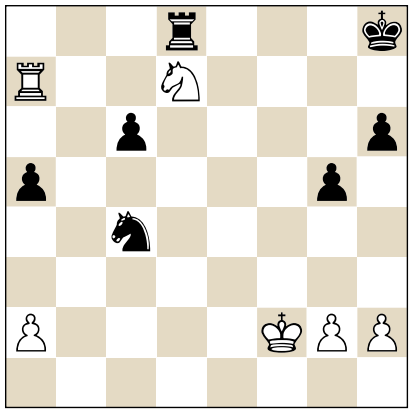
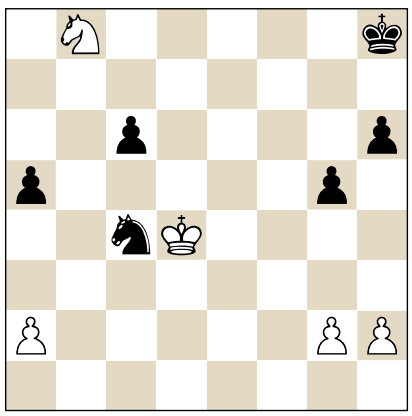
This is what I had been counting on. In fact, I thought that a rook move along the 7th rank was winning too, but fortunately I noticed in time that it wasn't. 37.♖a7? would have thrown it all away: 37...♘xc4+ 38.♔f2



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and for a second this seemed completely winning to me, until I noticed the saving 38...♔g8!! which gets the king out of the mating net, while not entering the x-ray of the rook. Now it's a draw.

37...♖xb8 38.♘xb8 ♘xc4+ 39.♔d4 The knight endgame is hopeless. The difference between the kings is just too big. The rest of the game is very simple as there is just nothing that can go wrong for White anymore.



39...♘b6 40.♘xc6 a4 41.♔c5 ♘c8 42.♔b4 ♘b6 43.♔c5 Some childish teasing. **43...♘c8 44.♔b4 ♘b6 45.♔b5 ♘d5 46.♔xa4 ♔g7 47.♘b4 ♘e3 48.♔b5 ♔f6 49.a4 ♔e6 50.a5 ♔d7 51.a6 ♔c8 52.♔c5!** Followed by ♘d5, when Black will face a tough decision, either to die in the pawn endgame or to get his king mated on a8.

Maxime resigned.

BIEL CHESS FESTIVAL

The bright and light main hall of the Biel Kongresshaus, the annual meeting place for chess players from all around the world.

Unfortunately for me, this result hardly improved my tournament situation. Maxime wasn't too concerned either, as he only had to draw his last-round game with the white pieces against the chasing Wojtaszek to secure the first place. Or to share first place, in case Hou Yifan beat Harikrishna with black. As happens so often in such situations, it was Maxime who was under pressure, but that was as exciting as it got. In a way it seemed impossible for the tournament to have another winner than the lucky and skilful Frenchman. Much to the relief of his fans, he managed to save his position with a pawn down quite effortlessly.

Hou Yifan, in her turn, lost to Harikrishna and finished on a respectable 50 per cent, a result she cannot be too unhappy about. Yours truly managed to do the same, although I had much more reason to kick myself than my Chinese lady colleague. Harikrishna was the third player to finish on 50 per cent, Wojtaszek came clear second on +1, and Motylev sank to the bottom of the table owing to four losses and only one victory.

The day after the tournament, some of us enjoyed a little game of football. Finally, after several failed attempts, Sam Shankland, the American GM who had been playing in the Open, succeeded in gathering a bunch of lazy chess players. All I can say is that there was probably just one satisfied footballer on the pitch: the mighty MVL. No, he isn't a good football player either, not at all in fact, but at least he was the only one who could truly come up with the excuse 'Well, at least I am good at chess.'

And so it was Vachier-Lagrave (who took part for the sixth time and who had already been victorious in 2009 and 2013) who won again. Maybe he is hoping that one day he will be called Mr.Biel? But then again, that's too many names for just one guy. ■

Biel 2014 — **cat. XIX**

					1	2	3	4	5	6		TPR
1	Maxime Vachier-Lagrave	IGM	FRA	2766	* *	½ ½	½ ½	1 0	1 ½	½ 1	6	2777
2	Radoslaw Wojtaszek	IGM	POL	2733	½ ½	* *	½ 1	0 ½	½ ½	1 ½	5½	2748
3	Pentala Harikrishna	IGM	IND	2726	½ ½	½ 0	* *	1 ½	½ 1	0 ½	5	2716
4	Anish Giri	IGM	NED	2750	0 1	1 ½	0 ½	* *	0 ½	1 ½	5	2711
5	Hou Yifan	IGM	CHN	2629	0 ½	½ ½	½ 0	1 ½	* *	½ 1	5	2734
6	Alexander Motylev	IGM	RUS	2698	½ 0	0 ½	1 ½	0 ½	½ 0	* *	3½	2614

Hans Ree

The Great Folly

A.J. Gillam's big book *Mannheim 1914 and the Interned Russians* appeared almost exactly a hundred years after the beginning of World War I. It's a mixed bag of a traditional tournament book and a source book, with hundreds of stories about the dramatic experiences of the chess players – Russians and others – during the years that followed.

In a way this is a book that I had been expecting for a long time, from the time I read the book *Praatschaak 1* by the Dutch chess writer Evert Straat, published in 1956. In a chapter called 'Où sont les neiges d'antan?' (where are the snows of yesteryear?), which was actually written in 1927, he wrote: 'Who will write the history of the vicissitudes of the European chess masters during the war? There is plenty of material for many fascinating stories; the amazing journey of Hromadka and Treybal, who walked in seven years from the Eastern front over the Urals through Siberia to Vladivostok; the adventures of Tartakower, who in the trenches proved to be as fearless a warhorse as at the chessboard, Sämisch at the battle of the Yser river, Marco emaciated in Vienna and so many other stories would be thrilling reading.'

Straat, born in 1899, heard these stories when as a young man he was making a precarious living reporting on international chess tournaments in the years after the disastrous World War I, sometimes called 'the Great War'. Presumably that name was given at a time when an even more devastating war was unthinkable.

Tony Gillam's book about Mannheim 1914 and its aftermath concentrates, apart from the tournament itself, which was interesting enough, on the fate of the Russian participants, journalists and spectators, who found themselves in enemy territory after Germany declared war on Russia on August 1st, 1914.

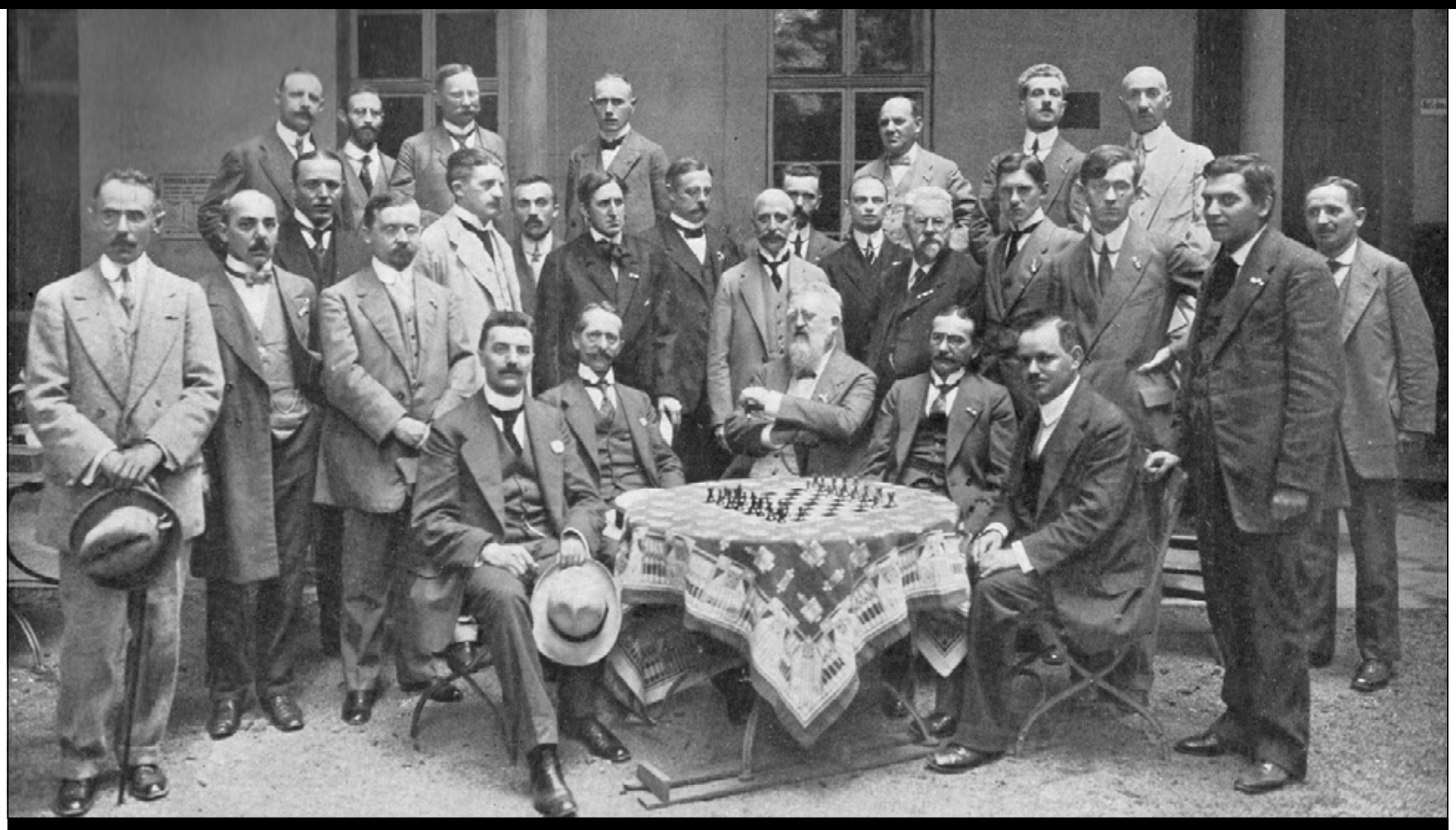
In 2013 a German book about the same tournament was published by Stefan Haas: *Der XIX. Kongress des Deutschen Schachbundes zu Mannheim 1914*. Obviously, Haas and Gillam were in contact while working on their books. Gillam refers to the book by Haas, and Haas announced in his own book that Gillam's book with its focus on the interned Russians was underway.

In 2006 Haas had written a book about another tournament that was disturbed by the outbreak of a big war: *Das Schachturnier zu Baden-Baden 1870. Der unbekannte Schachmeister Adolf Stern*.

The fate of the two tournaments was different, just as the wars that broke out in 1870 and 1914 were different. The tournament of Baden-Baden was completed, whereas that of Mannheim 1914 had to be stopped after 11 of the scheduled 17 rounds had been played.

The casualties of the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-1871 are estimated to be some hundreds of thousands, while the smallpox epidemic that was caused or at least facilitated by the war, made another few hundred thousand victims.

But in 1914 the world, and especially Europe, had progressed. The death toll of World War I (1914-1918) on the battlefield is estimated to have been about 15 million people, while the misnamed Spanish flu, which the American troops brought to Europe, from where it spread to the rest of the world, took even more lives. These horrors, unimaginable at the outbreak of that war, occurred after a period when Europe had dreamed of eternal peace. In 1909, an influential book by the British journalist and politician Norman Angell had been published, *The Great Illusion*, which argued that because of the interdependence of the European economies, war would be futile, as even the victors would lose economically.



Group portrait at the 1914 German Chess Congress in Mannheim. Back row, standing: NN, NN, Krüger, John, NN, Flamberg, and Maliutin. Middle row, standing: Janowski , Fahrni, Duras, Vidmar, Carls, Bogoljubow, Marshall, NN, Robinow, Post, Tartakower, Schellenberg, Alekhine, Breyer, Réti and Ahues. Front row, sitting: Römmig, Gudehus, Gebhardt, Tarrasch and Spielmann.

The angel of history

The outcome of the war of 1870-1871 had laid the seeds of World War I, which in its turn led to World War II, with horrors compared to which everything that had happened before paled into insignificance.

It's a hundred years ago now that the so-called Great War started with a conflict between the Austrian-Hungarian empire and the Kingdom of Serbia that might have remained local, but became a European massacre on a scale yet unseen. Who says that politicians are wiser nowadays? Not me. At the centenary of this European folly I think of the famous lines by the German philosopher Walter Benjamin about what he calls the angel of history:

'A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.'

On June 28th in Sarajevo, the Bosnian Serb Gavrilo Princip fired the shots that killed the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, first in line as successor to the emperor Franz Joseph, and his wife Duchess Sophie. There was a banquet in Mannheim on July 19 – the day before the first round of the tournament – attended by Emanuel Lasker and his wife. On that day, peace still reigned, but a big step towards impending doom had already been taken.

On July 6th, Germany had declared its unconditional support for Austria, an assurance that became known as the 'blank cheque'. It was meant to deter Russia from supporting Serbia in case of a military conflict.

At the tournament banquet, the President of the German chess federation said that nothing was so in need of peace as chess. The Mayor of Mannheim said that the peoples of Europe were much more peacefully inclined than was generally assumed. Something bad was obviously in the air, but not yet fully grasped. When war is really there, or seen as inevitable, talk of peace usually falls silent.

Both Gillam and Haas provide a summary of the chains of events that led, first to the declaration of war by Austria-Hungary on Serbia on July 28th, and a few days later to Germany's declaration of war on Russia. Gillam puts almost the full blame for the subsequent catastrophe squarely on Germany. There are different views, for instance in historian Christopher Clark's recently published and highly praised book *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*, but as Gillam writes himself: 'The causes of the First World War are many and varied and this is not the place to go into them.'

Farewell, goodbye!

On July 29th, Tarrasch, one of the tournament participants, declared: 'Gentlemen, once Germany starts to

Hans Ree

draw the sword, it will not go back into its scabbard without blood having been drawn. That is necessary for German honour!' Two of his sons would die during the war, one in battle and one probably by suicide.

On Saturday August 1st, the day of Germany's declaration of war, the 11th round of the tournament was played. After that, the organizers were forced to break it off.

In November, the Melbourne newspaper *The Australian* (Gillam's research covers a broad range) wrote about an evening at the Melbourne Chess Club: 'Mention was also made of the good feeling that existed between the individual players in spite of their countries being at war. Frenchmen, Russians, Germans and Austrians saying goodbye and wishing each other all good luck, as if there were no war.' And earlier in 1914, the German magazine *Deutsche Schachblätter* had written about the tournament hall on the day the tournament finished: 'The flag of the German Chess Federation, waving over the entrance, bade farewell. Goodbye! Goodbye!' It was assumed then that the war would be brief.

> 'Gentlemen, once Germany starts to draw the sword, it will not go back into its scabbard without blood having been drawn.'

Not much of modernism

After 11 of the scheduled 17 rounds Alekhine was leading with 9½ points, followed by Vidmar with 8½ and Spielmann with 8 points.

Both Haas and Gillam present an article by Capablanca, written before the tournament started and published in *Capablanca's Magazine*, in which he pointed out that what he called the five strongest players in the world, Lasker, Rubinstein, Schlechter, Teichmann and himself, did not take part, as the organizers paid only negligible prizes. Some players who did take part were damned with faint praise by Capablanca, such as Spielmann, who 'always has great opportunities in a tournament where the strongest do not play.'

In fact, for ordinary mortals the prizes were not negligible, and when you look at the list of participants with hindsight, it seems a fine tournament. Apart from Alekhine, who after St. Petersburg 1914 was already a big star, there was a mix of the older, or slightly older generation (Marshall, Janowski, Tarrasch) and young stars (Bogoljubow, Tartakower, Réti, Breyer) who would make their name after the war.

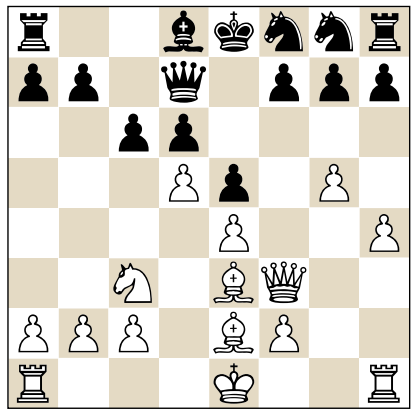
Because there were three players present whose name is connected with hyper-modernism, Tartakower, Réti and Breyer, I wanted to see how much of modernism there was in their opening choices in Mannheim. Nothing to speak of in Réti's and Breyer's games. Tartakower, who had made 1.f4 his main weapon as White, played two games with b3, ♗b2 and (the one time he got the chance) ♗b5, a set-up that nowadays is connected with the name of Nimzowitsch. He lost both games. As Black he played the King's Indian once, certainly not a brand-new opening, but in the spirit of what later would be called the modern movement.

Energetic Alekhine

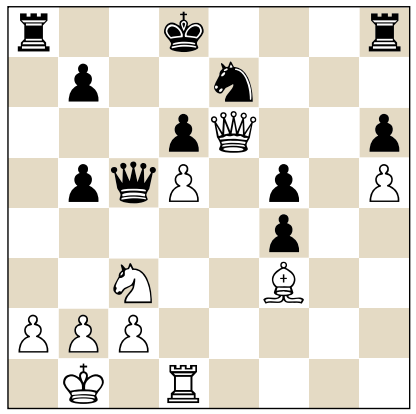
The one game Alekhine lost, against Janowski, was when he chose another modern opening, the Queen's Indian. Apart from that he allowed only one draw. Here is his game, anything but faultless but certainly energetic, against the innovator Gyula Breyer – known for his supposed dictum (which he never really wrote) 'after 1.e4 White's game is in its last throes' – who would die in 1921 at the age of 28.

IG 3.10 – C50
Alexander Alekhine
Gyula Breyer
Mannheim 1914, round 4

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♗c4 ♗e7 4.d4 d6 5.♘c3 ♗g4 6.h3 ♗xf3 7.♕xf3 ♘f6 8.d5 ♘b8 9.♗e3 ♘bd7 10.g4 ♘f8 11.h4 ♕d7 12.♗b5 c6 13.♗e2 ♗d8 14.g5 ♘g8



This looks like a game by Steinitz; all pieces on the back rank except ♕d7. **15.0-0-0 ♗b6 16.♗xb6 axb6 17.♕e3 ♕c7 18.f4 ♘g6 19. f5 ♘f4 20.h5 h6 21.f6 gxf6 22. g6 ♔f8** A mistake, for now White could win a piece with 23.g7+ ♔xg7 24.♖hg1+, when 24...♘g6 is forced, as 24...♔f8 would lose even more material after 25.♕g3. **23.gxf7 ♘e7 24.♗g4 cxd5 25.exd5 f5 26.♗f3 ♕c5 27.♕e1 ♔xf7 28.♖h4 ♔e8 29.♔b1 b5** Oblivious to White's threat. **30.♖xf4 exf4 31.♕e6 ♔d8**



32.♘xb5 ♕xb5 33.♕xd6+ ♕d7 34.♕f6 ♖h7 35.d6 ♔e8 36.♖e1 Here 36.dxe7 ♕xe7 37.♗c6+ would finish the game quickly. **36...♖a6 37.♕g6+ ♖f7 38.♗d5 ♖xd6**

39.♕xf7+ ♔d8 40.♕f8+ ♕e8 41.♕xe8+ ♔xe8 42.♗xb7 And White won the endgame: **42...♔f7 43.a4 ♘d5 44.♗xd5+ ♖xd5 45. b4 f3 46.a5 ♖d4 47.c3 f2 48.♖f1 ♖d2 49.a6 ♔e6 50.b5 f4 51.♖xf2 ♖xf2 52.a7 ♖f1+ 53.♔b2 1-0**

Badly needed prize money

After breaking off the tournament, the organizers decided to pay out part of the prize fund, proportional to the part of the tournament that had actually been played. For instance, first prize was 2000 Marks. As Alekhine was leading the tournament after 11 rounds, he should receive about 1300 Marks. Haas gives a calculation to establish its modern equivalent: 1 Mark in 1914 = 4,768 euro now. Such calculations should always be taken with a grain of salt. From the data that Haas gives about prices and incomes in 1914, it appears that a Mark in 1914 was worth much more than that.

On August 1st, a Saturday, the banks were closed and would re-open only on Monday. When war breaks out, a weekend can be an eternity. Money was important for everyone, but especially for the Russians. To return to their country, for instance by way of Switzerland, they needed money. Those who were forced to stay in Germany, some of them for many years, would need money to make their internment bearable.

The organizers made great efforts to see that the players received their due, and as far as I could make out, they succeeded in this aim. It seems that Tarrasch objected against giving prize-money to the Russians, which wouldn't be surprising.

The Masters group was the flagship of the Mannheim Congress, but there were four other international tournaments. Gillam reckons that altogether there were 24 Russian players and 12 Russians who had come in another capacity, as journalists or just spectators. Here 'Russians' stands for citizens of the Russian empire, which was much bigger than modern Russia and

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included Ukraine, Poland, Finland and the Baltic states. We wouldn't call all of them 'Russians' nowadays, but then, nationality was what counted.

Gillam's book is a mixed bag of many things. For one thing, it is a fully-fledged tournament book with notes to the games from the Masters group compiled from many contemporary sources. The bulk of the games from the two *Hauptturniere* is also given – as with the Masters group, a few of them are missing – and then there are the casual games between the Russians after the outbreak of the war and those that were played in the tournaments organized in Triberg, the town of their internment.

The story of the peregrinations of the Russians after the Mannheim tournament constitutes the biggest part of the book and is based on an abundance of sources from many countries. Two of these stand out for their extensive coverage of the events: the Russian-language autobiography by Fedor Bohatyrchuk, published in Canada in 1978 (*My path of life to Vlasov and the Prague Manifesto*) and a series of articles for the St. Petersburg newspaper *Rech* by Boris Maliutin entitled *Two Years in Germany: Impressions of a Civilian Prisoner*.

Both Bohatyrchuk and Maliutin had played in Mannheim in the *Hauptturnier*. A. Bohatyrchuk would become a very strong player with a lifetime score (between 1927 and 1935) of 3½-½ against Botvinnik. Maliutin had been one of the main organizers of the tournament in St. Petersburg 1914, which was won by Emanuel Lasker, ahead of Capablanca and Alekhine.

Friendly colleagues

Bohatyrchuk did not have to stay in Germany for very long. Like many of the Russians in Mannheim he was imprisoned for a few days in the town of Rastatt, about 72 kilometres south of Mannheim, and then sent to Baden-Baden, where a military commission would judge if he was fit for military service, in which case he would have had to stay in Germany. As a medical student he should have been able to tell a convincing story of bad health, yet he failed to fool the German doctor. Their conversation, as given by Bohatyrchuk, is shortened a bit here.

German doctor: 'Tell me, colleague, when and why have these pains started in your stomach?' Bohatyrchuk tells him that they had started after a game of football, when somebody had kicked him in the stomach. 'And tell me, colleague, how could you possibly play football and also run when you have such awfully frost-bitten toes?' Bohatyrchuk said that he had been goalkeeper. 'And tell me, colleague, how could you possibly play chess in the morning with such terrible headaches?'

Bohatyrchuk said that his result had indeed been disappointing. The doctor laughed and said: 'Now I see that you are really sick!' The very welcome decision of the military commission was that Bohatyrchuk was to be sent to Switzerland for treatment.

Alekhine and Peter Saburov, a player and organizer from St. Petersburg, had the same luck. Bohatyrchuk writes that Saburov was elderly and not very healthy – to which Gillam adds that Saburov was 34, which to the 21-year-old Bohatyrchuk may have seemed elderly – but that Alekhine was quite healthy. 'Definitely the doctor examining him was an admirer of Alekhine's chess genius,' wrote Bohatyrchuk.

Return to a different Russia

One way or another, most Russian players were able to leave Germany, but seven of them, Bogoljubow and Romanovsky amongst them, had to stay in Baden-Baden for some months and were then allowed to move to Triberg, a rather pleasant tourist town in the Black Forest. There were restrictions to their freedom of movement, such as a curfew and a duty to report daily to the authorities, there was boredom, but as long as they had money to pay for a hotel, there was not too much hardship.

Of course through the years money became more and more of a problem, but there was some help from Russia and also from the British chess federation, which sent prize money for the small tournaments organized in Triberg in exchange for the annotated games.

After Germany and, by then, Bolshevik Russia had signed the peace treaty of Brest-Litovsk in March 1918 – the war in the West would last longer – the Russians (there were hundreds of thousands of them in Germany) could gradually return home. Of the chess players' group in Triberg, Alexei Selesniev and Efim Bogoljubow decided to stay in Germany.

Those who went back to Russia found a country that was completely different from the one they had left. There had been a revolution, there was civil war, there would be the reign of Stalin and for those who lived long enough, there would be the German invasion in 1941. Some of the players mentioned in Gillam's book would die during the siege of Leningrad.

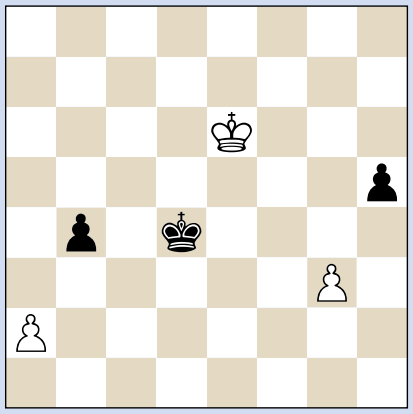
After the revolution there was an exodus of Russians in the opposite direction. It has been estimated that in 1923 there were 360,000 Russians in Berlin alone. Berlin was called Little Petersburg and the Berlin district Charlottenburg was called Charlottograd. These were interesting times, as in the proverbial Chinese curse.

Gillam's book cannot be read as a coherent story. He is not so much a writer as a compiler of sources, and as such he has done a splendid job, leaving no stone unturned. I am rather fond of such hodgepodge books, although I must admit that I found it often difficult to follow the general thread of the story. An index of names would have been helpful– but there is only an index of games and openings. The long list of chapters offers some compensation for this lack, but still, a big, 525-page book needs an index. This said, there are hundreds of fascinating stories here. The reader will have to make some effort to weave them together. ■

Beware: Brilliancy!

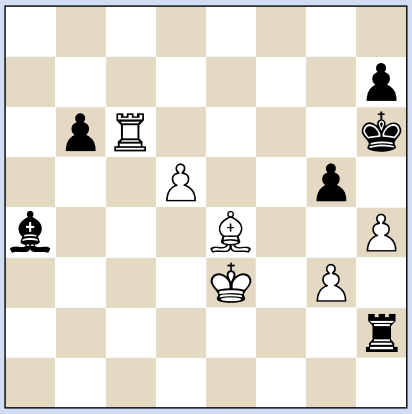
Solutions of page 79

Yochanan Afek



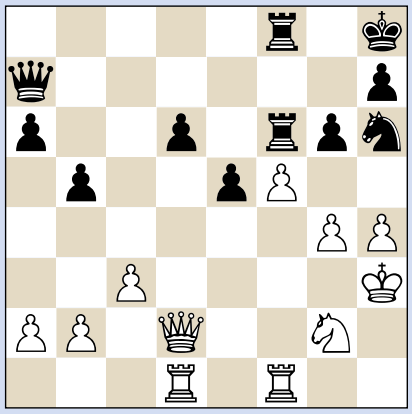
Yildiz–Danielian
Istanbul 2009

The only way is the waiting move **54.♔e7!** which keeps the white king ready to follow his counterpart to either side. **54...♔c3** Or 54...♔e5 55.♔f7. **55.♔d6** with a draw.



Mandizha-Krush
United States 2013

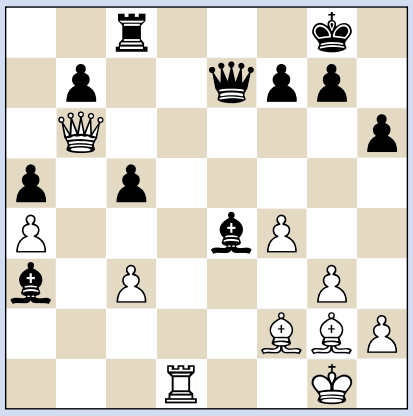
Often the only way to refute a sacrifice is to accept it: **42...♗xc6! 43.dxc6 ♖a2! 44.c7** How to stop the pawn? **44...♖a3+ 45.♔d2 ♖a2+ 46.♔e3 ♖a3+ 47.♔d4 ♖a4+ 48.♔d3 ♖a3+ 49.♔c4 ♖a5! 50.c8♕ ♖c5+ 51.♕xc5 bxc5** with a draw.



Ding Yixin-Szczepkowska
Istanbul 2012

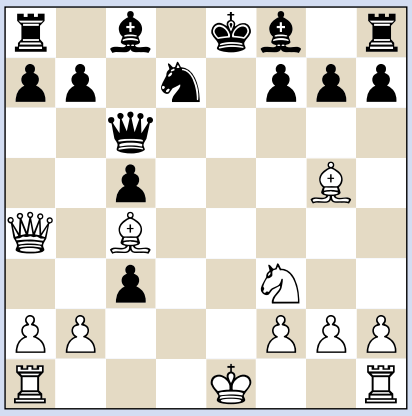
A dangerous winning attempt was: **28...♕d7!! 29.♕xh6** 29.g5? ♖xf5; or 29.a4 gxf5! 30.g5 f4+ 31.♔h2 ♘g4+ etc. **29...gxf5 30.♖xf5** 30.♕d2? fxg4+. **30...♖xh6 31.♖xf8+ ♔g7 32.♖df1 d5** with a promising advantage.

Readers are invited to send in brilliant missed opportunities by titled players to: afekchess@gmail.com



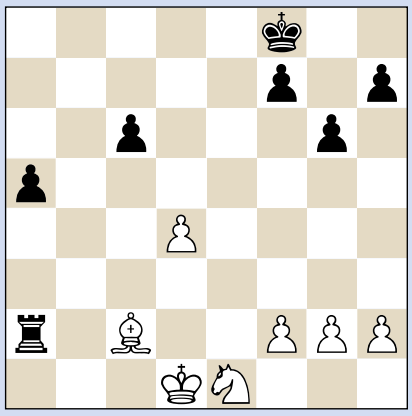
Shumiakina-Kononenko
Chisinau 2005

It takes a great deal of imagination to discover the forced winning manoeuvre **27.♖e1!! f5 28.♖a1! c4 29.♖xa3! ♕xa3 30.♕e6+ ♔h7 31.♗xe4 fxe4 32.♕f5+!** Accuracy to the very end: 32.♕xc8? ♕c1+ 33.♔g2 e3 34.♗g1 e2 35.♕f5+ ♔h8!, draw. **32...♔g8 33.♕xc8+** and wins.



Peng-Haast
Amsterdam 2014

White missed the amazing **12.0-0-0!! ♕xa4 13.♖he1+ ♗e7 14.♖xe7+ ♔f8** A first battery is created. **15.♖xf7+ ♔g8 16.♖fxd7+!** An echo battery! **16...♕xc4 17.♖d8+ ♔f7 18.♘e5+ ♔e6 19.♘xc4** and wins.



Sachdev-Lagno
Wijk aan Zee 2011

Precise play would lock up the black rook: **32.♔c1!** Threatening 33.♔b1 ♖a3 34.♔b2, trapping the rook. **32...♖a1+ 33.♗b1 ♖a4 34.♘c2 c5 35.♔b2 c4 36.♗a2 ♔e7 37.♗b3!! cxb3 38.♔xb3 ♖b4+ 39.♘xb4 axb4 40.♔xb4 ♔d6 41.♔c4** after which the pawn ending is hopeless.

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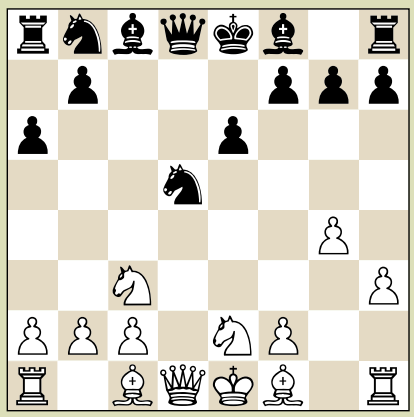
Jan Timman

Bu untouchable in Politiken Cup

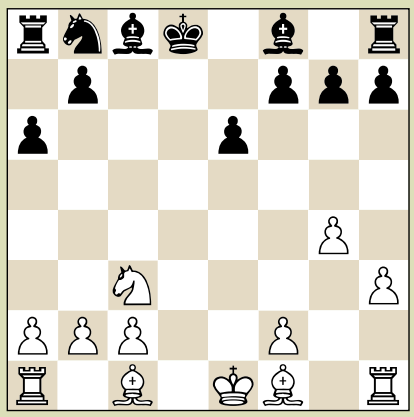
This year, the Politiken Cup in Helsingor had a far stronger field than usual. I was given number 11, behind a number of well-known GMs. Many of them regarded this as a warm-up for the Olympiad, which would immediately follow this tournament. This was also the reason why the Politiken Cup was taking place earlier than normal this year. Before the start, someone asked me which top player I was most in awe of. I immediately replied Bu. Together with Ding Liren, Bu had recently won the fifth Danzhou tournament. In their personal encounter, he had allowed a totally winning position to peter out to a draw; otherwise he would have won the event outright. My hunch proved to have been correct: Bu was untouchable in Helsingor, conceding only two draws. I have noticed that Bu, unlike other Chinese GMs, plays a very classical kind of chess. Ding Liren's and Wang Hao's games sometimes feature obscure fights full of sharp, unclear complications; but not Bu's. His successes are mostly based on his phenomenal technique. In Helsingor, I was most impressed by his win against Rodshtein, in which he managed almost imperceptibly to tweak a slightly worse endgame position into one in which only he had winning chances. At the time of play, Rodshtein and Bu led the field with 5½ out of 6.

SI 14.12 – B90
Maxim Rodshtein
Bu Xiangzhi
Helsingor 2014 (7)

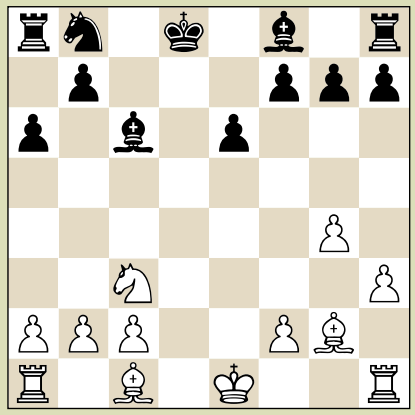
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘f6 5.♘c3 a6 6.h3 e6 7.g4 d5 8.exd5 ♘xd5 9.♘de2



9...♘xc3
The usual move is 9...♗b4. The text shows that Black wants to enter an endgame that will require accurate defending. But this is fine with Bu.
10.♕xd8+ ♔xd8 11.♘xc3

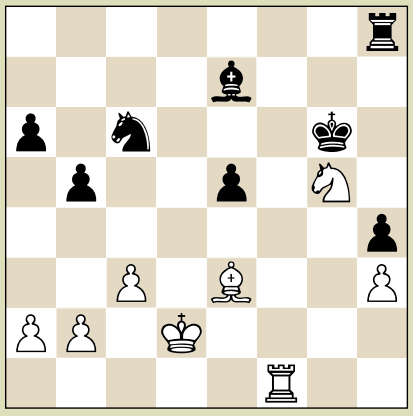


11...♗d7
The point of Black's play. He takes his queen's bishop to c6 in order to exchange the fianchettoed white bishop.
12.♗g2 ♗c6

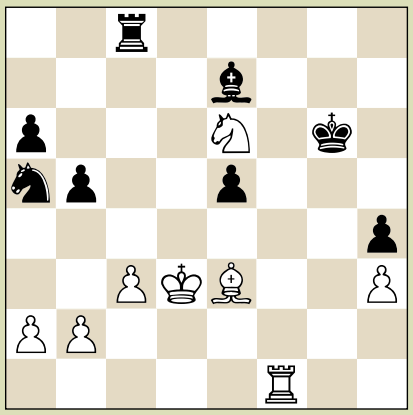


13.♗xc6 White sheds a tempo to be able to castle queenside; but whether the white king will be all that much safer on the queenside is debatable. In Kurajica-Bukic, Belgrade 1969, there followed: 13.0-0 ♗xg2 14.♔xg2 ♘d7 15.♗f4 ♖c8 16.♖ad1 ♔e8 17.♖d3, with a slight plus for White.
13...♘xc6 14.♗f4
In these conditions, the alternative 14.♗e3 would have yielded White slightly more chances of an opening advantage.
14...♗e7 15.0-0-0+ ♔e8 16.♖he1 ♖d8 17.♘e4 h5 This advance betrays ambition. Black wants to intensify the battle by opening a file on the kingside. 17...f6 or 17...e5, followed by 18...f6, would have allowed him to equalize easily.
18.g5 e5 19.♗e3 f5 20.gxf6 gxf6

21.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 22.f4
White is following a strategic plan: he wants to exchange on e5 and then lay claim to square e4 for his knight.
22...h4
And Black has a plan as well: he dreams of taking a knight to g3. You could say that the text makes clear that Bu is playing for a win.
23.fxe5 fxe5 24.♔d2 ♔d7 25.♖g1 ♔e6 26.c3 ♔f5 27.♘g5 b5 28.♖f1+ ♔g6

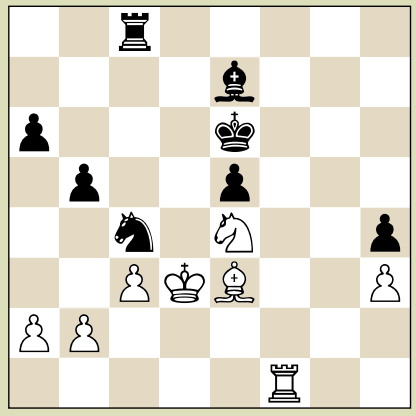


29.♘e6 A sharp move that forces Black to concentrate on defending for the moment.
29...♖c8 30.♔d3 ♘a5

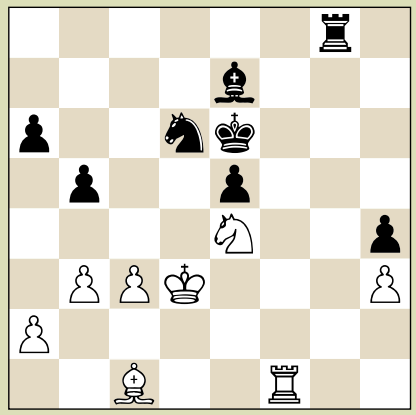


31.♖g1+
But this is inconsistent. White still wants to get his knight to e4, but going about it this way will cost him a great deal of time, which will allow Black to take the initiative.
To keep control in the centre, White should have continued 31.♔e4, when he would have been able to meet 31...♘c4 with 32.♗c1, and now Black will be unable to exploit the slightly precarious position of the white knight, because his king is cut off.

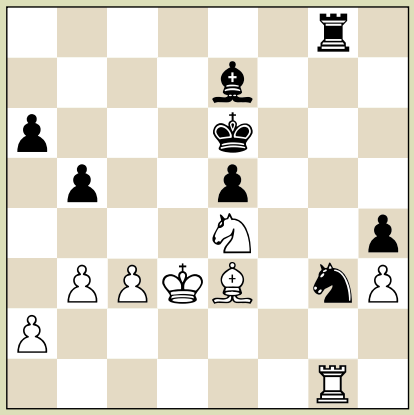
31...♔f6 32.♘g5 ♘c4 33.♘e4+ ♔f5 34.♖f1+ ♔e6



Now the black king is nicely centralized again.
35.♗c1 ♖g8 36.b3 ♘d6



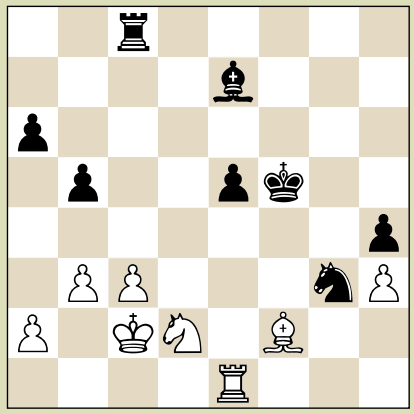
Black has optimally exploited White's inaccuracy on move 31. White is unable to maintain his presence on square e4, with the result that Black is slightly better.
37.♗e3
The best defence. White's rook wants to take the opposition on the g-file.
37...♘f5 38.♖g1 ♘g3



See my comments to Black's 17th and 22nd moves.
39.♘d2 ♖d8+ 40.♔c2 ♖c8 41.♖e1 ♔f5 42.♗f2

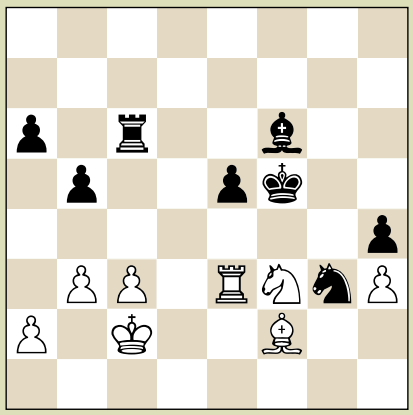
CALLE ERLANDSSON

Bu Xiangzhi's successes are mostly based on his phenomenal technique.

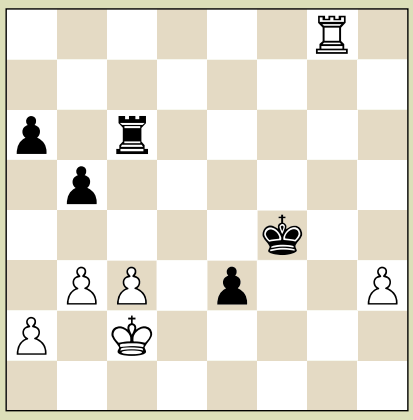


42...♖c6 42...♗f6, to maintain the pressure on the white position, would have been sharper. Now White

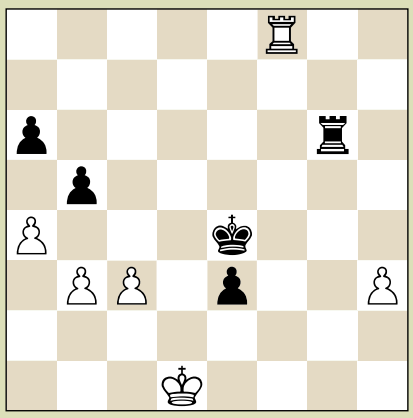
reaches a tenable rook ending by force.
43.♘f3 ♗f6 44.♖e3
White is playing well here, eliminating the outpost on g3.



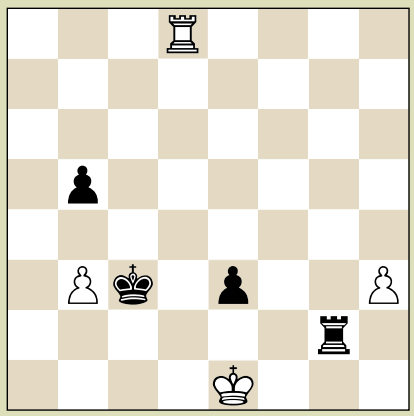
44...e4 45.♘xh4+ ♗xh4 46.♗xg3 ♗xg3 47.♖xg3 ♔f4 48.♖g8 e3



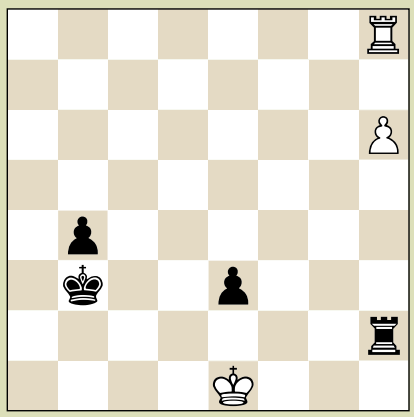
49.♖d8
The most direct way to draw was 49.c4, since 49...bxc4 50.bxc4 ♖xc4+ 51.♔d3 wouldn't yield Black anything. After the text the game also remains within drawing territory.
49...♔f3 50.♔d1 ♖g6 51.♖f8+ ♔e4 52.a4



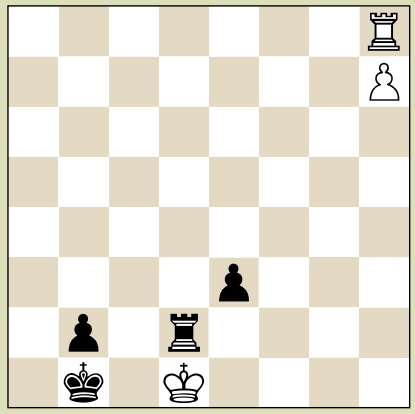
52...♖g1+
Another winning attempt was 52...♔d3, after which White would have to play accurately to maintain the balance: 53.♖d8+ ♔xc3 54.♔e2 ♔xb3 55.axb5 axb5 56.h4! ♖h6 57.♖d3+ ♔c4 58.♖xe3 ♖xh4 59.♔d2, and the white king makes it to the queenside just in time.
53.♔e2 ♖g2+ 54.♔e1
54.♔f1 was also possible. After 54...♖b2 55.axb5 axb5 56.c4 b4 57.h4 ♖xb3 58.♖e8+ ♔d3 59.♖d8+ ♔xc4 60.♔e2 there will be no win for Black.
54...♔d3 55.♖d8+ ♔xc3 56.axb5 axb5



57.h4? The decisive error. The only way to draw was 57.♖e8 ♖g3 58.♖h8! ♔xb3 59.♔e2, and White gets a far better version of the game. Incidentally, 58.h4 (instead of 58.♖h8) wasn't enough either in view of 58...♖h3 59.♖h8 ♖h2!, and Black is better.
57...♖h2 58.♖h8 ♔xb3 59.h5 b4 60.h6



60...♔b2!
Great accuracy is required. This king move is the only winning move.
61.♖b8
61.h7 b3 would have led to mutual zugzwang. With the text White tries to dodge his fate, but mutual zugzwang remains in the position.
61...b3 62.♖h8 ♔b1 63.♔d1
After 63.h7 b2 it would be mutual zugzwang again.
63...b2 64.h7 ♖d2+

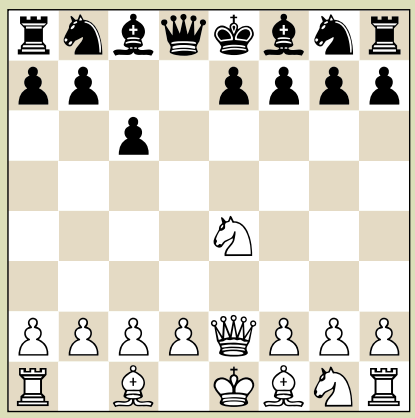


On its way to the seventh rank.
65.♔e1 ♖d7 White resigned.

With 9 out of 10, Bu remained a full point ahead of Jones, Matlakov and Rodshtein. Rapport, who failed to topple Bu in the final round, was trailing the runners-up by half a point. Rapport's games are always full of excitement. In Round 1 he won after just five moves.

CK 1.5 – B10
Richard Rapport
Tim Rogers
Helsingor 2014 (1)

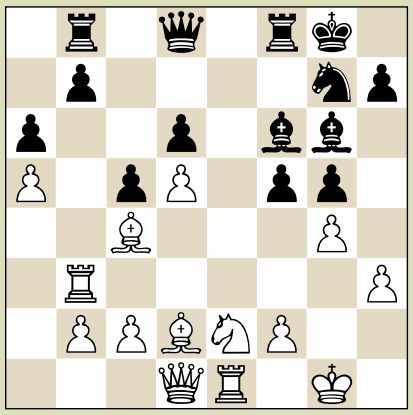
1.e4 c6 2.♘c3 d5 3.♕e2
A trick that Black falls for hook, line and sinker.
3...dxe4 4.♘xe4



4...♘d7?? 5.♘d6 mate.
The black player, by the way, is not the Australian GM Ian Rogers, who retired from active chess some time ago. It's the Englishman Tim Rogers, who not only played the shortest

game in Round 1, but also the longest one in the final round, which he won in 99 moves.

Scandinavia was hit by a heatwave this summer, with the result that the playing hall was sometimes stiflingly hot. I found this hard to deal with, and often lost concentration during the middlegame, for example in Round 3, which started at four o'clock in the afternoon (after the morning round).

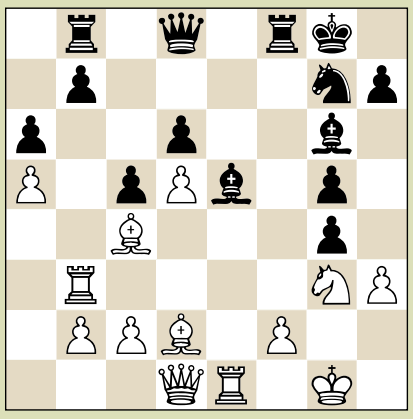


Englert-Timman
position after 23.♘e2

Black is in excellent shape here. After 23...fxg4 24.hxg4 ♗e5 25.♘g3 ♕f6 White would be forced onto the defensive. But I thought the swap on g4 could wait.

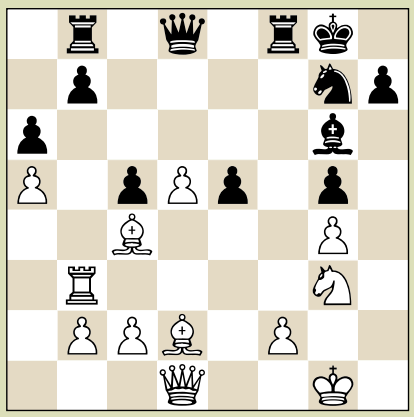
23...♗e5 24.♘g3 Now I saw that White had a way out after the planned 24...♕f6: with 25.♕f3 he can aim for a queen exchange. So I decided to swap on g4 after all.

24...fxg4? When White sank into serious thought here, I realized something was amiss.



25.♖xe5!
A very strong exchange sacrifice. Black's bishop was the lynchpin of his position, and its disappearance makes the white d-pawn very dangerous. Also, the white rook, previously cut off, is suddenly ideally positioned.

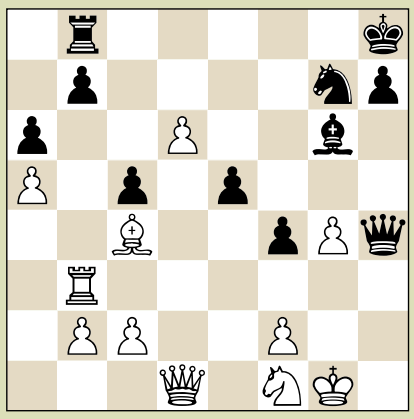
25...dxe5 26.hxg4



26...♖f4 I made this counter-sacrifice almost immediately. I realized that my attack lacked teeth, but after other moves the white position would have played itself.

27.♗xf4 gxf4 28.♘f1 ♔h8 29.d6

29...♕h4 Va banque, à la Jobava. Except that the Georgian GM tends to play these kinds of moves at the drop of a hat. I had no choice here.

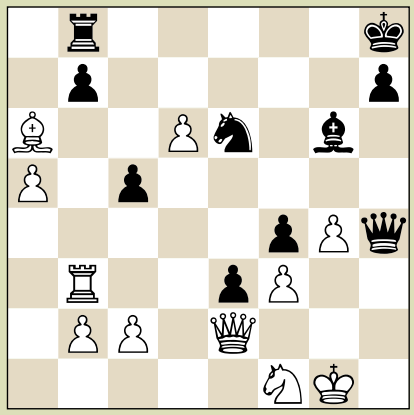


30.f3 After a long think. Frankly speaking, I was relieved when White played this, for Black now has a concrete plan. 30.d7 would have been very strong. It's not even so obvious a move, because the pawn is not threatening to queen. But the important thing is that square d6 is queened for the queen, e.g. 30...♗e4 31.f3 ♗c6 32.♕d6!, and White is winning.

30...e4! On its way to e3.

31.♗xa6 31.d7 was still strong. Now the position is equal.

31...e3 32.♕e2 ♘e6

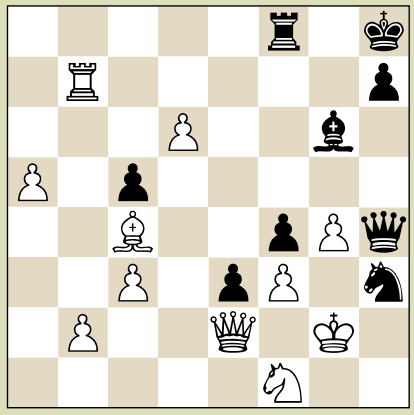


33.c3? Keeping the knight from d4, but the pawn move is too slow. He should have gone 33.♕h2 ♘d4 34.♕xf4 ♘xb3 35.d7! ♕f2+ 36.♔h1 ♕h4+, and it's a perpetual.

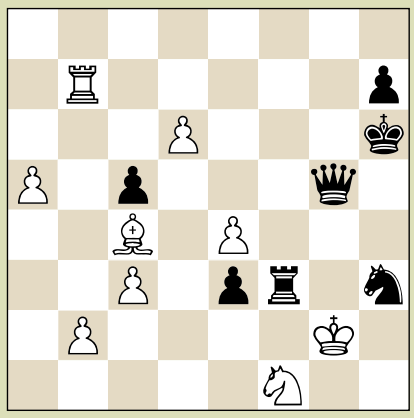
33...♘g5! Suddenly the black attack is getting wings. White can no longer defend adequately.

34.♗c4 ♘h3+ 35.♔g2 ♖f8
35...♘f2 would also have won, but there's no reason to hurry.

36.♖xb7



36...♗e4 The most elegant approach. **37.fxe4 f3+ 38.♕xf3 ♖xf3 39.♖b8+ ♔g7 40.♖b7+ ♔h6 41.g5+ ♕xg5+**



And White resigned, because 42.♔xf3 is met by the mating move 42...♘g1+. ■

Just Checking

Parimarjan Negi

CURRENT ELO: 2645

DATE OF BIRTH: February 9, 1993

PLACE OF BIRTH: New Delhi, India

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Palo Alto, United States

What is your favourite colour?
Black.

What kind of food makes you happy?
Sushi.

And what drink?
Espresso.

Who is your favourite author?
Franz Kafka. In addition, I can't get enough of Indian-English authors like Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy.

What was the best book you ever read?
Catch-22 by Joseph Heller.

What is your all-time favourite movie?
Inside Llewyn Davis.

What is your favourite TV series?
True Detective and *House MD*.

Do you have a favourite actor?
Michael Fassbender and Matthew McConaughey.

And a favourite actress?
Scarlett Johansson.

What music do you like to listen to?
Eminem is always inspiring, while Erik Satie is excellent to calm myself. Recently I have been discovering Leonard Cohen and Cat Stevens.

Do you have a favourite painter?
Not one particular painter... but Delaroche's painting *The Young Martyr* has been etched in my mind for a long time.

What do you see as your best result ever?
Becoming a GM at 13. It's all been downhill since ☺.

What was the best game you ever played?
After a while you notice flaws in every game... I'd choose my game against Bologan from this Olympiad, since it is still fresh in my mind. ▶

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?
It's hard to choose a favourite player, but among the modern players I really appreciate Jobava. Seeing his games makes me believe chess isn't dying yet.

What was the most exciting chess game you ever saw?
Kasparov-Short, Extreme Chess match (YouTube video).

What is the best chess country in the world?
Russia.

What are chess players particularly good at (except for chess)?
Being perfectionists.

What is it that you appreciate most in a person?
Ambition.

What is it that you dislike in a person?
Hypocrisy.

Do you have any superstitions?
I always J'adoube my pieces before playing the first move.

Who or what would you like to be if you weren't yourself?
Elon Musk.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?
Ray Kurzweil, Andre Agassi, Bertrand Russell.

What is the best piece of advice you were ever given?
Fail. Fail better.

Is there something you'd love to learn?
Playing the cello.

Where is your favourite place in the world?
A cosy room where I'm not disturbed.

What is your greatest fear?
To get old.

How do you relax?
Listening to slow, classical music. Or binge-watching a TV show if I have enough time.

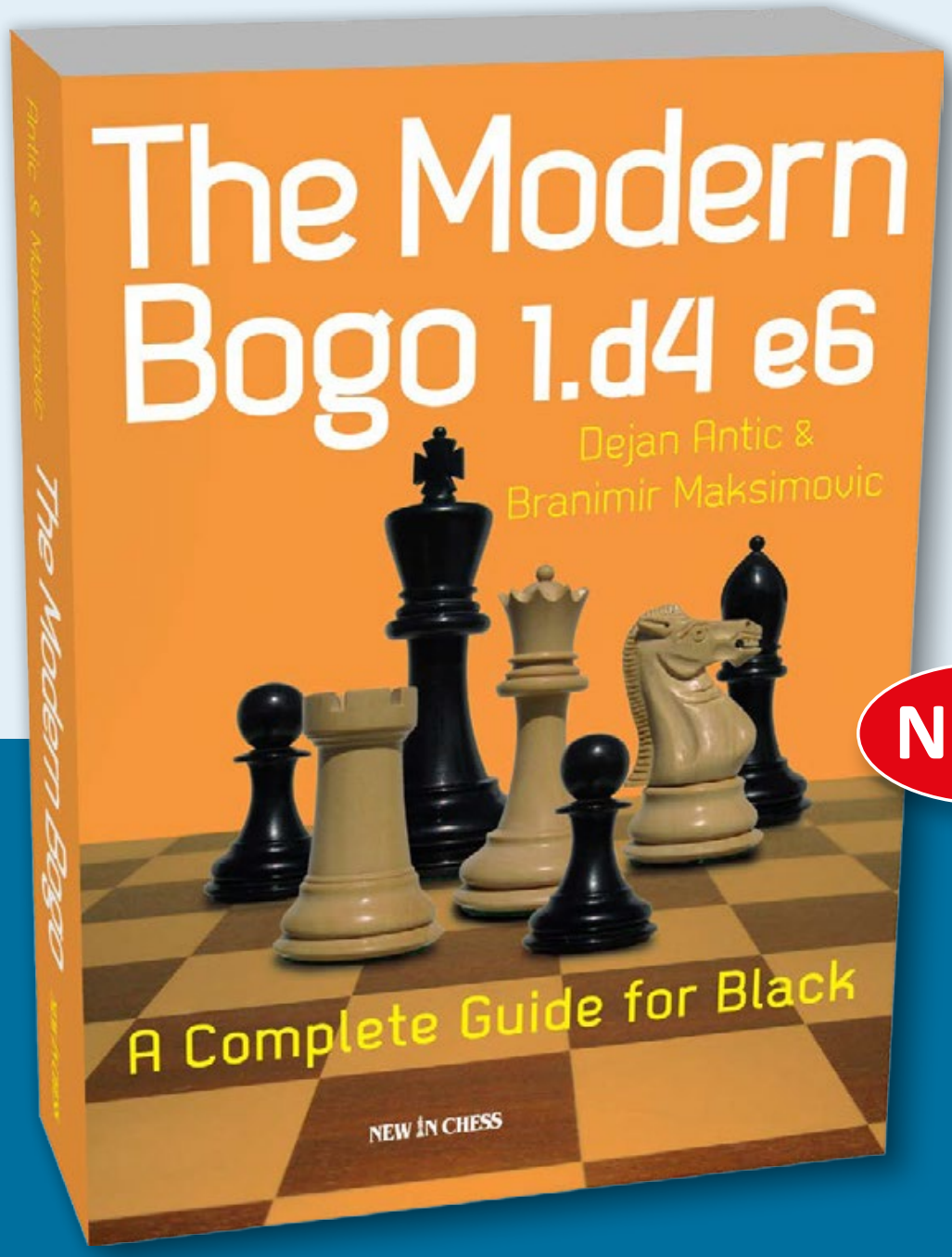
If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?
I'd rather play chess in a world without the computer engines.

What will be the nationality of the 2050 chess World Champion?
Will we still have a world championship?

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?
I don't know... I'm not very good in everyday life yet.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?
'Losing is not like dying. It is much worse' – Nigel Short.

A complete & fresh repertoire against 1.d4



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